SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BETTER GOVERNING OF INDIA

SIR F. S. P. LELY, C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

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WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

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BY

SIR F. S. P. LELY, C.S.I., K.C.I.E.
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To H.E. the Right Hon. Lord Lamington, G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E

Governor of Bombay.

MY LORD,

Six months ago I ceased to be a Civil Servant of the King after nearly thirty-six years, during which I learned, in the school of men and things, to greatly sympathise with the people of India and with my fellow-servants of all races who bravely, and often under much personal and domestic strain, do the work of government in the land. The last bit of service to the Empire within my power is to offer to your lordship this little sheaf of facts and opinions. To the Secretariate many of my words will seem as idle tales. To me they are home-truths, obvious to a plain man.

I mean no disrespect to the circle of able and devoted men who have been, and are, your lordship's advisers, and collectively form your Government. It is not they but their training (in some cases) and their methods that are wrong—that result in a machine

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admirably adjusted and fair to outward seeming, but with little transfusion into it of the life of the country.

It would be much more in accord with my feelings to keep silence—and in the midst of private trouble the effort to speak has been specially hard ; but it has become clear to me that in these days of trial no one who thinks he has knowledge can loyally withhold it. If you are unable to accept the views expressed I may at least be able to tell myself that there is something more to be said on the other side than is apparent to me.

F. S. P. LELY.

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I.

IT is a truism to say that there is no absolute ideal of a good government—that the best is that which is adapted to existing conditions and adjusts itself to advancing requirements. As there are towns in India which, by building upon themselves for century after century, have raised their own level a hundred cubits or more, so a government of living force is ever raising its own plane. A hundred and fifty years ago the cultivator in India went to plough with matchlock in hand; in every village in Northern Gujerat there was a lofty look-out on which a watchman was perched, at whose cry of "the Kathis are coming" every man, woman, and child, and every head of cattle, hurried from the fields to refuge within the village wall or cactus hedge. A man had as little freedom as an animal in the choice of an occupation,* of a

* This was true of the ordinary villager notwithstanding the occasional rise of Geikwars and Holkars from among the armies and attendants of Courts.

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residence, and, if his caste was low, of dress and means of locomotion; for justice he was dependent on a village clique, for surgery on the barber, for education on the Brahmin, who made it a crime in a low-caste man even to listen to the Vedas, the chief repository of learning. No one had a mind of his own, or would have dared to speak it if he had. Domestic murder by sorcery and poison was rife. Within six months, and thirty miles of Calcutta, one hundred and fifty women, some of them virgin widows, are stated at the end of the eighteenth century to have become Sati. To all this, after a time of confusion, the British brought suppression of open crime, equality before the law,* and a fairly just administration, all which met the situation for so long as the memory of the bad old times remained. Mr. Forbes, in his "Oriental Memoirs," gives a graphic picture of how the inhabitants of "Baroche" district, in 1785, dreaded their reversion to the rule of Sindia. "No prayers, no ceremonies, no sacrifices, "were left unperformed by the different castes and "religious professions to implore the continuance of the "British Government." After the Mutiny, however,

* How far this is regarded as an unmixed good may be inferred from a free translation of a popular song epitomising our rule:

"Under British rule the gods (Hindu) are gone
to the dogs,
"The saints (Mahomedan) to Jericho,
"The low-caste men knock people about."

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a new movement began which is only just gathering full force—a revival of Education, Trade, Manufactures, and Agriculture, culminating for the present in various Colleges, Boards, and Departments. In all this the British have only been repeating on a large scale their achievements in other parts of the world, by virtue of which they plume themselves on their aptitude for governing backward races. Up to a point they undoubtedly possess it. Not only are they firm and just by temperament, but their haughty aloofness from native influences makes it easier to be so in action; they are sincere, they are humane, they are as wishful to see India prosperous as her own sons are, except in some few cases where the interests of their own country are involved. So much is mainly what is needed in the earlier phases of contact between a strong race and a weaker. The fruit of it is discernible in the India of to-day, though it is not likely to get the full recognition it deserves from those who have most gained by it. There comes a time, however, when even peace, justice, industry, and commerce do not satisfy. Many individuals realise already that the sword and the scales are after all rudimentary tools. The citizen is getting tired of hearing Aristides always called the Just. He sees that the "departments" can be as ruthless as the whilom farmer of taxes; that "the reign of law" has broken down the ancient safeguard of custom, which insured a measure of protection to all classes for many centuries; that the foreign

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administrator, left to himself, tends to lose the touch of sympathy and knowledge. In short, the time has come for revising or rather supplementing our methods. If we are to make good our claim to be the greatest imperial race in history we have now to show that we are equal to a higher mission than that of keeping order and weighing out to the ryot's creditor his due pound of flesh in the Civil Courts, higher even than that of starting mercantile and agricultural agencies. Throughout India the rising cry is, as it must be eventually in every body of sentient beings, "let us "have rulers who know us!"

We all of us too tardily recognise this. Indeed it is the want of imagination in the English nation, and in minor things, which is the root of half our troubles among a people who are sensitive to the last degree. The national instinct when we see a person to whom we are unaccustomed is not indeed to heave a brick at him, manners being now softened, but to dismiss him with a joke or a sneer, and the sneer hurts worse than the brick. There is many an Englishman who in the way of duty would—in time of trial does—die for the people, who will not take the trouble to be civil to them, or to learn their little turns of talk, of social rule, of religious observance. Naturally he fails to attract cordial feeling, for to most men it is easier to "love them that hate you" than them that despise you. Thus the native Chief who has to be pressed by the Political Agent to feed

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his people in famine, or who runs away from them in their extremity to a happier clime, wins more affection than the dogged Englishman who stands by them. For the Chief knows them and at least is never suspected of laughing at them, though he may be hard on them. Even in his selfishness he is intelligible and touches a common chord. The goodwill of the Englishman loses still further in penetrative force by the knowledge that he acts under orders, under a system in which personal volition and sympathy make little show. It is embodied not so much in men as in measures. Few who have been long in India can have failed to note that after a great calamity, such as a fire or flood, a sympathetic visit by a Governor or other person in authority is more keenly appreciated than even a grant of public money. Europeans cannot read without a responsive glow one of Lord Curzon's eloquent recitals of achievement by his government in the fields of agricultural improvement, of education, of general care for the ryot, but it does not touch the imagination of the average Indian nearly so much as the performance of the Raja who sits in a pair of scales and weighs himself against rupees which he gives away to Brahmins. It is often said, and with truth, that the recent famines, so far as their influence has gone, have drawn the races closer together; but the reason was not the action of Government itself so much as the sight of English men and women

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devoting themselves with true gentleness, even to death, to mitigate pain and save life. The story of Sultan Bahadur, as told in the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* and the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, is still repeated in Gujerat. His famine policy was summed up in the statement that when the people were starving he, "when riding out, never gave less than a gold mohur (sixteen rupees) to any poor person." Compared with that truly "royal" personage, the Government which spent fifteen crores in a single year (1899–1900) in Code wages, Village doles, and Agricultural loans, with no personality behind it, is a charity machine or at best a Mr. Gradgrind, evoking none of that half-filial attachment to the ruler of which the Oriental is capable.

Thus, in a hundred ways, the Indian understands us as little as we understand him; but it lies most on us as the stronger side to lead the way to a broad view of each other. The break begins with mere social manners. Scott tells us in *Ivanhoe* how the first cause of offence between the Normans and Saxons at a social meeting was the derision of the Norman knights at Cedric who, ignorant of their etiquette, "dried his hands with a towel instead of suffering the moisture to exhale by waving them gracefully in the air." We sometimes allow quite as trivial causes, quite unworthy of an imperial people, to prejudice us in our intercourse with the natives of India. It is indeed not easy for a stranger to understand offhand

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how one and the same man regards it as a compliment to one's host to eructate after dinner, and as piggish to touch with the lips the vessel one is drinking from. It is unintelligible at first to a Western how a lady can talk freely of natural functions that are never mentioned among us,* and blush with shame if she is asked to mention the name of her husband, or how a modest village woman will expose her body and yet draw a veil over her face when she meets a stranger, until it is remembered how entirely the division into things decent and indecent depends upon convention in the particular society. A European may be excused for feeling a shock when he learns that a man brings more shame on his relations by taking water from a low caste than by committing a felony, that another man thinks it as great a sin to kill a flea as kill a man, and that eating beef is to the Hindu worse than cannibalism. Yet he may, if he tries, so adjust his view as to see that these beliefs are not only natural, but even arguable to a man who has been brought up in them. To be tolerant and also strong is the note of an imperial race, and the real "Little Englander" is the man or the woman who "cannot stand these natives." The empire has to be welded into one, and no Englishman or Englishwoman can abjure his or her duty because of the attitude and manners of the new Indian, any more than Clive could

* "The simplicity which conceives that whatever can exist without blame may be named without offence."

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have backed with honour before the Nawab's men at Plassy. In many cases the difference between the races is less than appears at first sight. We talk of the natives' want of moral courage, but how many of ourselves would have the pluck to defy the opinion of their own circle? Even the unmannerliness of this generation will appear less offensive, less hopeless, if we remember that it marks a time of transition, which is always ungainly, and that not only in India has it been found hard by a class that has just emancipated itself from servility, to stop itself from running into the opposite extreme of insolence. There is very little that will strike us as unreasonable or repulsive when we look around it, as men of the greater world should do. A man of much Indian experience was relating how a boy in a village hit another with a stick maliciously and killed him, whereupon the parents on both sides got the dead boy burnt and reported that he had died of itch. He gave it as an instance of moral perversity, but on reflection it appears that both families acted not without reason. The guilty boy was doubtless very penitent, and the only result of denouncing him to the police would be (as they believed) either to send him to the gallows or to entail a great expenditure in getting him off. The only grotesque part of the story is the selection of the fatal disease. There is no need to multiply instances. The conclusion is that the Englishman who, holding fast to his own self-respect and dignity,

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still looks to the more attractive side of our fellow-subjects with whom we have to live, and does his best to induce others to do the same, is playing the part of a good citizen and son of the empire.

The highest placed individual in a Presidency, the Governor, who comes from England, must of necessity be "foreign," but if he is well advised he need not be conspicuously so. He may at least be what the people reasonably expect him to be. When he pays a visit to a town the general remark among the crowds who line the road to see him is, "Which is the Lât Sahib?" They think it would be more fitting if he wore something, were it only a ribbon or a star, to distinguish him from his companions. According to the newspapers, when the King visits a provincial town at home for a ceremony he wears uniform, and it is not easy to understand why his representative in the East should be content to appear in simple morning dress. Such little amenities are of much more political importance in Surat than in Manchester. He passes, not only without appropriate garb, but without sound of music or show of banners or horsemen. In the assembly that usually follows to lay a foundation stone or open a railway, not a word of the home language of the people is usually uttered. Finally the "Lât Sahib" is presented with a silver trowel which he carries off to add to the trophies in his house in London. No one who knows him or recognizes his position would grudge it or much

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more, but the loyalty stirred in the people by the whole proceeding, as they go away, is about on a par with the religion of Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" after attending the parson's ministrations at church—

> "I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd, but I thowt a 'ad summut to saay,
> An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd away."

Contrast for political effect all this with what took place, within my knowledge, when the Chief of a certain native State publicly opened some waterworks at his capital. He drank the first draught from a silver pot, which he then presented to the most miserable-looking old woman he could see in the crowd. He then gave Rs. 10,000 for building a fountain on the spot. It is likely enough that the woman was a disreputable old person, and if such a thing had been thought of under "efficient" British administration the police would have had the selection of her, and would have previously had to report that she was respectable and had no relations to the sixth degree able to support her. In other words, the delightful spontaneity of the thing would have been lost, but the Account rules would have been satisfied. I do not for a moment say the Governor should slavishly copy the Raja, but, rightly understood, the two episodes go far to suggest how the native ruler touches the popular sentiment while the other does not, though he may be just and strong, and probably

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does not spend on himself a tenth as much of the people's money as the Raja. In the one case the foot of the foreigner is deep-set, in the other it is one of themselves. I may note in passing that the Governor should never visit a town without making a not excessive, but tangible, gift to the public. A budget grant of say Rs. 25,000 in all every year for this purpose would be of infinitely more political use than the sumptuary allowance for dinners and dances to Europeans. Some small but much needed building, instruments for the local hospital, games for the local school, a case of wholesome books for the local library—any one of a dozen things. The selection of it might form a convenient topic to sustain a flagging conversation with the local magnates, would be in accord with the popular view of the fitness of things, and would promote kindly personal feeling.*

The matter becomes much more serious when the conduct of individuals expands into the policy of a Government. Our best and wisest men fight against it, but even they perhaps scarcely realise how the council board whose orders daily reach the lowest village servant is as alien an institution as the dinner table. The Bombay merchant thinks himself a friend of India when he draws on the map, and gets Govern-

* Lord Dalhousie "gave a dress of honour to each Municipal Commissioner at Amritsar on quitting his ward" (*see* Lee Warner's "Dalhousie," vol. i. p. 275). He had an eye for small things as well as large.

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ment to sanction, a straight railway line for the carriage of cotton and grain to his ships, but does he, or any of us, know or care how the advent of a railway affects the life of a village or district? How many of us trouble about a more obvious fact—the embankment waterlogging the crops and generating fever! Lying on the very surface of things, it has taken fifty years of railway administration for us to recognise the distress to third-class passengers of a day's journey without any convenience but a seat in a crowded compartment. How many of our rulers know the power of the underling—the man whose favour has to be bought in some currency or other, whose weapons are the Land Revenue Code, the Salt law, the Abkari law, the Forest law, the Irrigation law, the Registration law, the rules for Grazing, for Sanitation, for Vaccination? How little is known, even in this time of disillusion, of the harshness of the plague measures wherever there was not wise and very close scrutiny—children carried off from their parents to hospital in their last moments, men and women stopped at the beck of some subordinate while on a journey of life and death, houses of furniture swilled with dirty disinfectant, and withal in some hospitals careless and callous treatment of the sufferers.

This isolation of Government from day-to-day life is aggravated by a change which it could not possibly help, and which is only now reaching its climax.

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What the Collector was and, if a forceful man, still is, in the district the native Mamlatdar, or Tehsildar, was in the sub-division. He was a man of the people, seldom knowing English, of conservative views, but loyal to his salt, and a friend, though often a bit of a tyrant, to the villagers. I have known such men in time of cholera clean up and disinfect their town in order to satisfy their superiors, but at the same time get sacrificial fires along the streets duly lighted by Brahmins in order to really meet the trouble. A few still survive in their retirement, and there are no better informants as to the feeling of the country. They have been replaced by a race of educated intelligence who know English and can therefore understand the Secretariate speech, but are too much of the "Sahib" to join the village circle. Whereas the former man sat on his cushion among his clerks, *primus inter pares*, the modern must have his chair and his table and, if possible, the solitary state of a separate room. Generally speaking there is now no one of authority to say what the people think and to explain what Government means. That mission is tacitly made over to the *Kal* and the *Kesari* newspapers. The real Englishman is seldom seen by the people, as the most literary are drawn off to secretariate or special work under some name or other, and the remnant that are left are not half enough to do the district work, and have to be reinforced by natives of the modern class who do not regard

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themselves as interpreters between Government and people, but only as agents to get in reports up to time and to pass decisions which will stand on appeal. At the top sit the gods of the Secretariate evolving out of their own consciousness, or out of books and papers, laws, rules, and resolutions admirable to look upon, and so the machine of government rolls on until it approaches the people, where it is confronted by a chaos of race, language, religion, and ways of thinking. Let me quote an instance or two of what happens in fact. Not long ago in the town of Prantij a stallion, the property of Government in the veterinary department, was cast as useless. A number of respectable Jain merchants, to whom all animal life is sacred, and with whom the whole town was in sympathy, presented a petition that they might be allowed to take charge of the animal, giving security that he would be treated well. It was presented to the Commissioner, who, being as usual a man of some thirty years' general experience, would, under a sound system of government, have had power to give orders himself to the veterinary department on such a minor matter, but was only able to send it on with his opinion that the wish of the petitioners should be met. The answer of the veterinary officer was that the horse must be destroyed, as the rules of the department required it. The shock to local feeling was much as if a foreign Government ruling in England, instead of giving a pension to an

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old soldier, had shot him to save expense. There is not a native Chief in India, Hindu or Mahomedan, who would have refused to do what those people asked. And yet we wonder they do not love us! Again, our village sanitary requirements are a constant irritation. The truth is the habits of the people are more cleanly than those of corresponding Europeans, though, following up the old, old mistake, we imagine they are not, simply because they are different. They resort, if left to themselves, for natural purposes to the open fields, where a beneficent sun quickly removes all nuisance. They keep their family friends, the cattle, in an apartment of their own dwelling-houses, believing, not without cause, that the fresh odour of the stable is wholesome and even sacred. They keep the dung in a pit in the yard impacted by the urine into a solid mass of first-rate manure, giving out little or no smell. Our sanitators are constantly at them to concentrate their night-soil in enclosures more or less secluded from the sun's action; to house their beloved cows and oxen in separate places out of their own care, at the mercy of the midnight thief or enemy; to carry away all their farm-manure to ground outside the village, where it will be pilfered by dishonest neighbours and wasted by sun and rain. The real sources of disease are the impurity of the village well and the want of drainage for stagnant water, and all attempts to remedy these are intensely appreciated. Upsetting the people's household arrangements and

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habits produces more discontent than the remission of half a year's revenue would counteract. So far as I know, the subject has never been taken up at head-quarters with knowledge and comprehensiveness, to the avoidance of neglect on the one hand and unwise zeal on the other. On at least one occasion the irritation caused by a Collector's action in the district of Kaira was formally brought to notice by Mr. Fernandez, the Survey officer, and ignored. There is at present nothing to prevent an official strutting into a village and picking out a man for prosecution, or, what answers his purpose still better, for threat of prosecution, because he has a house-drain similar to a hundred others, which has been running ever since the village began. The modern Abkari system was introduced with much ability, with a true desire to wean people from drunkenness and to increase the public revenue, but also with a ruthless disregard of the claims of capital and the popular habits. Taking the country around Surat city, for instance, in 1879 a new tax of 8 annas per toddy-tree was imposed, increased at a month's notice to a rupee, and again without any notice at all to Rs. 2.14. The produce of an average tree in Pardi sub-division was assumed, with complacent contempt of the facts, to be 100 gallons, instead of 15 as it really was. This fell with great severity on capitalists, who had been led by immemorial immunity from serious taxation to plant trees in inferior land which now did not yield enough to pay expenses.

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A result was that in the first eight years the number of productive trees in the single district of Surat fell from 2,113,406 to 625,148, that is, the owners of a million and a half trees, on most of which capital and care had been spent, were driven to destroy them. A suggestive contrast to the recent treatment of brewers and publicans in England! Moreover, to large numbers of dumb people in the more remote jungle, toddy was home-grown food. It was more than what beer is to the Englishman. It enabled them to eke out their scanty meal in the hot season, and to fortify themselves and families (at any rate, they thought so) against malaria in the rains and cold weather. This was the opinion of practically every local officer of weight; but nevertheless a tax was maintained without abatement, of such weight as to prohibit the use of *licit* toddy except on rare occasions. As a natural consequence the supply of toddy fell off year by year, and in various ways the use of mowra spirits was encouraged at its expense. In other words, alcohol, in the form of a natural, nutritious, and not unwholesome beverage, was swept out, to return as a devil sevenfold more unclean in the form of fiery spirits. I cannot give figures, having none by me, but the general facts are deep in my memory. Some concession might have been made to this special class, but the loss of Rs. 10,000 of revenue moved the rulers of the day more than the deprivation of 100,000 people of their only luxury and comfort. It was not

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that they lacked pity, but simply that they did not know, and, I must add, from the way they flouted local opinion, they gave the impression of not wanting to know, anything that would obstruct their programme. There is no other Government in the world that would treat its working classes as the Bombay Abkari Department was allowed to treat the "black races" and similar people between 1879 and 1885. After that it so happened that a Government, composed at the time of specially broadminded men, responding to appeals of district officers, made the burden easier, but the gulf between things that are and things that seem to those above us is as deep as ever if we may judge from the amazing statement made on behalf of Government at a meeting last year of the Bombay Legislative Council, that "toddy is not used by natives of Gujerat as a part of necessary food." I can only say that if this is so now it is because Government has extinguished its use. By common consent of the district officers of thirty or forty years ago, and in the belief of the people, it is a food. It contains carbo-hydrates and albumen. It is specially sustaining at the time of year when the classes concerned have little else to eat. Often and often has it been said to me, "Toddy fills our bellies and (distilled) liquor does not." The latest Abkari pronouncement of the Government of Bombay, which has obtained the cordial assent of the Government of India, deals with several points, the most material of which are

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the opening by Government of liquor shops at popular fairs (melas), and the provision at ordinary shops of facilities for secret drinking by the better classes. I would ask for no more concise instance of how, with the best intentions, we often take the wrong road in India. Liquor shops are held in this Resolution to be justifiable at melas because their prohibition at a European cricket match would be resented. The room for secret drinking is only "a reasonable supply of decent accommodation" like that of the English "bar-parlour," the absence of which would drive men to private drinking, *i.e.* at home, or in drinking-parties. It is with dismay that I see such arguments advanced and accepted by men high in office. It is enough to reply that a Hindu mela is *not* an English cricket match, that the back room of a native liquor shop is *not* a European bar-parlour, that private drinking is often impossible under the conditions of native society, except behind the shop, and finally, that methods of business which would be appropriate enough to a brewer or distiller in an English town are unseemly in a great Oriental government. The difference between the case of the cricket match and of the mela is simply this, that in the former an attempt to withhold liquor would be regarded by nearly all, even of those who do not want it for themselves, as impertinent interference with private right, while in the latter it would be regarded, even by those who usually drink, as a natural and

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righteous exercise of sovereign power. We often talk of the decay of authority in India, but is it remembered that Government has itself abjured most of the functions which would give it moral dignity and "divine right" in the eyes of the Oriental? In the sphere of religion this may be unavoidable, though I have my doubts whether it is wise to stand by as a tacitly consenting party to the general spoliation of endowments that is going on. In such matters as that of the liquor traffic there is only one course which will secure for it the respect of its subjects, and that is to make clear to the simplest folk, not by Government Resolutions, but by action, that it only handles the thing to check its use by all admissible means. A booth reeking with seductive fumes deliberately set up when and where the people gather together to say their prayers and amuse their children, for the sole object apparent to the passer-by of bringing coppers to the till of Government, is degrading and destructive of reverence and loyalty. In common with the whole system, it also conveys a moral sanction to drink which is not without force. Even in England the meaningless government stamp is used by the quack to palm off his nostrums. How much more its virtue in a country where the order of the King still retains in some sense a semi-sacred character. Then, again, the view of "private drinking" put forward is coloured by prepossession derived from English life. The bedroom in which the young Englishman could shut

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himself up and tipple is unknown in the average Hindu house. As a matter of fact, his own house is the last place to which the young Hindu would resort to escape the observation of the little world whose opinion he most of all fears, women as well as men relations living together to the number of a dozen or a score or more.* The most superficial observer must have met the man who drinks whisky and soda and eats forbidden food at the railway refreshment-room who would not think of doing so if there were any danger of being seen by his neighbours who live fifty miles off. Clubs or organised parties, too, soon become well known, and no one would join them unless he had determined to throw off the mask. There is no suggestion of superior comfort in the Indian "bar-parlour," so far as I have seen it, except the moral comfort derived from a sense of secrecy. All that is asked by temperance reformers is to insist on the tavern-keeper eliminating that element. Let him make a part of his public room as comfortable as he likes, provided it is not in a hole and corner. After all, whether the above views or those of the Resolution be correct, so long as Government allows the side entry for the shamefaced youngster to slink up, and the back-door and the quiet room, it is Government

* "Paradoxical as the statement may seem it is yet true that "for the beginner (in drinking) the home is the more public "place." (*Indian Spectator*—one of the most thoughtful of native papers—of June 24th, 1905.)

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that will have to bear the odium of encouraging drink, and will be the object of the mother's curses. They may be undeserved; but here again we have to deal, not with the gentlemen of the Secretariate, who live and write in the light of pure reason, but with millions who are often impulsive and perverse, but must be taken as they are if they are to be wisely ruled. All these points turn on the actualities of native life, and it is significant that the Resolution bears no indication of any attempt to get at the opinions of reliable Indians. I do not suggest that none such was made. It is doubtless not so bad as it seems. But at a time when the cry is being raised for more representative government, the discussing and deciding in a public document of questions based on intimate social life without reference to a single native authority, and with ostentatious reliance on analogies drawn from England, is not merely not statesmanship,—it is not ordinary tact. To my mind the arrogant tone of the whole deliverance is most disquieting. We have taught the people too well to make it possible to rule them in that way.

One more instance of the derangement we call government is of surpassing import. Perhaps no Secretariate, imperial or provincial, realises how utterly hateful, except in the large towns, is our elaborate system of laws and court machinery, especially now that time has cast a glamour over the panchayats of olden days. Of what use is the extinction of bribery

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if it is replaced by stamps and fees to pleaders? I have myself seen the accounts of legal expenditure incurred by a small landholder in fighting through all the courts for his son who was charged with murder. The total amount was Rs. 7882.8, which of course meant hopeless debt. As the accused only got off on the final appeal, the father not unreasonably infers that it was money which saved him from the gallows. How can laws be said to be for the people when their terms are untranslateable into the vernacular even by paraphrase? Mr. Thorburn well remarks that if, as often happens, the familiar pathway is wrongfully closed to a ryot's ancestral field, he must be told in English that he must sue "the dominant "owner for a release of the servient heritage under "chapters iv. and v. of the Easements Act." Either the unhappy man must go to an expensive pleader to ask what all this means, or he must take the law into his own hands and so bring on himself the police and a charge of rioting before the magistrate. If the pleader guides him into Court he finds the Judge bound by law to presume that he has entered into an agreement if the paper bears on it his signature. The presumption is reasonable in England, but is opposed to the facts in India, as every one knows who knows the men. And yet we affect a superiority to the Mahomedans who imposed their language and laws on the Courts, or the Marattas who intentionally made their town-duty schedules too

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involved to be understood except by special agents. Congress lays no stress on this, the chief of the ryots' grievances, because the system brings grist to the mills of so many of its members.

The paucity of English officers and their absorption in office work is an evil common to all India, and, combined with the literary government now in vogue, is bearing its natural fruit. Mischievous rumours implying radical ignorance of the English character seem to me more serious than years ago. They are more consistent and more plausible. Missionary writers describe with horror the self-slaughter of crazy fanatics under the car of Juggernaut, but their readers would be surprised to learn that, on the other side, a street accident in Baroda, during a visit by Lord Elgin in 1891, was nursed into a story, widely and firmly believed to this day, that thirty-five persons were recklessly crushed under the wheels of the Viceroy's carriage. We justly pride ourselves on the famine funds, both public and private, little dreaming that not one-tenth of the people benefited have been allowed to think that all the money was expended for its proper purpose. It went to meet distress in Ireland, to help us to fight the Boers—anything that will catch the popular ear. Of late it was taught with much success in the Central and United Provinces that Englishmen spread the plague in order to reduce the population, by going about at nightfall and poisoning the wells. Numerous assaults, which did

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not find their way into the papers, were made upon white men who were found abroad at that time of day under what were thought suspicious circumstances. In the town of Bulsar, which had long had two English schools, and which for nearly forty years had been connected with Bombay by a main line of railway, not a soul, in the early days of the plague, would pass along the road in front of the hospital because it was universally believed, or at any rate said, that an oil mill was under every bed to grind the patient into ointment for use on European patients in Bombay. About the same time it passed from mouth to mouth in the advanced and educated district of Kaira that the British Empire had fallen in the country south of the Mahi, and that the plague cordon which had been drawn along that river was really for the purpose of preventing the news from getting through to the north. So implicitly was this accepted that, in a village within eight miles of the B.B. and C.I. Railway, a new kingdom was proclaimed and preparation made for selecting a Raja, which led to bloodshed and the murder of some policemen. If the people are not more credulous than formerly they are at least fed with more detail and method. As remarked by a writer in the *Pioneer*, the case against the English as propagators of the plague was made out with unanswerable logic. Were not Englishmen always saying in their books that the danger of India was over-population? Did the English themselves get

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plague? Did the native sufferers who were taken to the English hospitals often or ever recover? The inference to the villagers, whose knowledge of the Englishman (whom they never see) is got from the *Kal* and *Kesari*, is obvious. Even the grossest German caricaturist would probably admit in his sane moments that all this indicates an ignorance of us personally among the people only equalled by our ignorance of them. There is absolutely no organic union between Government and its subjects. Mr. Townsend thinks that the two races are by nature incompatible. I do not agree with him so far as he means that they cannot possibly live and work together. On the contrary the best instances of Oriental government and of mercantile ventures to be found in the East are made up of both factors. From a native regiment in the field of battle down to a village panchayat, from the Bombay Municipality to the conservative Native State, sound results are for the present best secured by a union of well-chosen agents of both. Like the famous currents in the Rhone, they may not mix, but there is every reason why they should run side by side and together form a great river. Even in those well-managed Native States where it has been thought well to dispense with direct English assistance, the aftermath of it still remains, and the influence of the British Empire still envelopes them on every side. Meanwhile there is no way so easy to Government of setting aside disagree-

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able truths as to "resolve" that statements such as those made above are exaggerated, that things are no worse than they have ever been. The future depends on which is right. It would be all very well to trust to education if that were not prevented by evilly-disposed men who make it their business to disparage and misrepresent, and who, by the gradual withdrawal of Englishmen into their office rooms, are left a free field. That they should gain the ear of the people will not appear strange to anyone who notes how, after centuries of education, the average British elector takes his opinions from his daily newspaper.

Considering that all Englishmen are bound together at least by common difficulties, it is remarkable that there is almost as little vital contact in Bombay Presidency between them and Government as between the natives and Government. I was much struck with the different spirit in which the Central Provinces is administered. There on a file of papers about some thorny subject that has been before the highest authority, the note is frequent, "Ask Mr. A. or Mr. B. to come and see me about this," or, "Secretary will please discuss this matter with Mr. C." On tour the Chief Commissioner carries with him doubts, difficulties, suggestions, and himself discusses the more important with the local officers and others who can give a useful opinion or information. Other matters are similarly treated by the Secretary. It may be said, in short, that unless he is sure enough of

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his own experience the head of the province does not ever arrive at a serious conclusion without personal touch with the men who will have to carry out his orders or be affected by them. In Bombay, so far as my experience goes, the Member of Council in charge of a matter never dreams of consulting privately or demi-officially with, or freely talking to, a Commissioner or Collector. The theory apparently is that he has nothing to learn. On the contrary I have met with more than one rebuff when I foolishly thought that a free talk might straighten things out. Everyone not dried up in a Secretariate knows that practical questions affecting the conduct of men often have subtle phases and obscure sides which cannot be expressed on foolscap and are invisible or misunderstood from the heights of a hill-station, but can be brought out in informal conversation. As to non-official opinion, I have less means of knowing, but merchants of the highest position have assured me that the general feeling in Bombay is one of acute resentment at what they consider the aloofness of Government. If there were no more personal consultation between the manager of a mill and his foremen than there is between Government and those who know, the business would be wrecked in a year; yet the former has to do with the spinning of cotton yarn and the latter with weaving the destinies of millions of sentient men foreign to their rulers and often to each other. Government, instead of being

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the head of an organism animated by the same life, drawing inspiration every part from the other, is detached except for a paper chain, self-contained, self-sufficient. And what I have to say, with all respect, is what most thoughtful men are saying, that the Bombay Government is blind to the ruin which is coming nearer to the empire every year—the ruin that must follow when the rulers live in one world and the ruled in another, when the Government accepts the guidance of men who have never had the chance of learning the language or the feelings or the aspirations of the millions whom God has entrusted to them. Among the natives of the country, among the European community that congregates in the Presidency town, among the King's servants who do his work in the country this voice is heard—"The Government is over us but not with us and of us."

Another, only less, evil of the want of solidarity between Government and its workers is the lack of human interest in the latter, individually. I may be wrong, but am inclined to doubt if the members of Government know even the faces of all their eighteen heads of districts, not to speak of the six in Sind, that is, of the men on whom most of all the success of the administration depends. I have known many a young fellow who might have turned out a wiser man if some one at headquarters had grappled him by a word of advice or warning, and so at least showed him there was an eye upon him. It would have done

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more good than nine-tenths of the documents that load the outward files of Government. I am aware that an answer to this is ready which will entirely satisfy the Secretariate. It will be said that this is the duty of the Commissioners, and so it partly is, but the reason why they sometimes lose sight of it is that they naturally catch the spirit of the Government, which is to think more of reports than of men. Moreover, unless the Commissioner is a specially strong man he has little influence in face of the fact, known by innumerable instances, that his opinion has seldom the power to insure a man's advancement or retard his promotion by an hour.

Indeed in nothing does a government show its accord or discord with the requirements of the hour more effectively than in its appointments and promotions; but this is a subject I would rather not pursue further than to note one more "morbid tendency," viz. the inclination to make appointments according to seniority alone. I am aware of the trouble that is incurred by superseding a man not glaringly incompetent, whose turn has come; but it ought to be faced by a strong authority; and what is more serious, of the danger of entrusting selection to a Secretariate out of touch with "working men." Not so long ago, for instance, the Collector who got in a good proportion of revenue in famine time would have been chosen by the Government of Bombay as "fit," while the sympathetic man who saw that this meant eating

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into agricultural capital would have been set back as "weak." Yet presuming, as we are bound to do, insight at headquarters, the maxim of "the weapon to him who knows how to use it" is altogether sound. To its neglect is due flabby administration and sometimes worse; over and above which is the sense in Government that all its officers, not being selected for fitness, are not to be trusted, which again results in the imposition of numerous references and the frequent issue of orders about petty detail, occupying the time of the central authority, which should have something better to do, and fettering the discretion of the able local man. Thus the power of the good man is curtailed in order to prevent misuse of it by the incapable. The paralysis of the limbs of the administration by excess of office-work is recognised by all, but, so far as I know, this, the chief remedy, is not accepted. Selection of the fittest, altogether regardless of seniority, is not necessary, and would be dangerous, but rejection of the unfit should be ruthlessly enforced. This would secure what would be made a cardinal point if the government of the country were being carried on by a business firm—a reliable head in every district. Then just as the Provincial Government claims for itself a sphere within which it is unconstitutional for the Government of India to encroach, so it should allow its local officers free action within certain limits, without incessant nagging and calling for reports. Thus not

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only would the district officer be partially relieved of writing, but Government would have more time to instil great principles, some of which are hinted at in this pamphlet, and which are now forgotten in the flood of trivialities.

Among the causes of the aloofness of Government in Bombay the first I would note is that it does not live with the people. The same may be said of the Government of India, but the conditions are different. Though some of the members of the latter are, and I trust always will be, men who have learned their lesson in the dust and heat of the plains, there are many of them who have come from Europe somewhat late in life, and who are not acclimatised. Moreover, their special function is to assimilate information and to formulate imperial principles. It is for the local Government to supply that information, to apply those principles with local knowledge, and to note the effect, and how they should be enforced and how modified. Unless the latter sees and knows *and feels* what is going on our rule must fail. With the single exception of the Governor its personnel, from the senior Members of Council to the junior Under-Secretary, is composed of men who have chosen India as the field of their life-career, and they may reasonably be called on to live in it on the same conditions as the merchants, the lawyers, and the other government servants of their own standing, who seldom get a glimpse of Poona or the hills except on leave. A Secretary to Government

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has no more work and less responsibility and worry than the Collector of a large district, and there is no reason in the world why he especially should be conveyed with his clerks every year from Bombay to the hills of Mahabaleshwar, thence to Poona, thence to Mahabaleshwar again, and thence to Bombay at the public expense. No one would grudge him as much comfort as he can get if the effect were not so pernicious. The Governor who comes out from England is in a different position ; but, as a matter of fact, I doubt if those who have recently ruled in Bombay would have themselves wished for so much isolation. If he found October in Bombay too trying he might visit outlying districts, as he now does in the cold weather, when he can less easily be spared from Bombay. For the rest the second season at Mahabaleshwar should be abolished ; a visit there of say two and a-half months of the hot weather should be allowed, and the remaining nine and a-half months should be divided between Bombay, the centre of the Presidency, and Poona, the centre of Maharashtra in the proportion of say seven months to the former and two months to the latter. This would not bring the members of the Government face to face with the people, but it would bring them one step nearer. It would place them in touch with representative men, not to speak of the non-official Europeans. One thing certain is that this ruling of India is a big grim business, and is going to be still more so in response, not only to the native

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demands we have created, but to the sense of our own countrymen and the modern ideal of what should be. It is not to be done by a Government that flits from one artificial little world to another, where the opinion of the Gymkhana bar and the Tennis Court looms larger than that of the millions down below, where the gracious host wins more applause than the wise administrator, where the seething desires and passions and vanities of those that plough the fields and pay the taxes only arise shrivelled up out of all perception in the daily paper or the statistical report.*

Truth compels me to hint at another alienating influence in the later Bombay tradition under which the able young Under-Secretary with a fatal facility for writing becomes the able Secretary and the still abler Member of Council—the dogma of Secretariate Succession. The man who has spent twenty or thirty years passing between Bombay, Mahabaleshwar, and

* In the *Times of India*, "Mail Edition," of July 8th, 1905—the first that comes to hand—I find the Poona letter of "Our own Correspondent," which may be taken to hold the mirror up to the average Englishman's and Englishwoman's passing thoughts. It has seventeen paragraphs dealing at length with the following subjects: the weather as affecting health and temper, a military review attended by the usual "fair women and brave men," a cricket match, transfer of a European doctor, monsoon race meeting, levee and reception, Governor's health, ball at Gymkhana, the delights of Rosherville, theatrical rehearsals in progress, golf at Yerrowda, cub-hunting, polo, Durbar at Council Hall, death of a native jockey, cricket match. All of them excellent things in their way; but is entire absorption in them worthy of an imperial race?

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Poona has come little closer to the country than if he had spent the time going backwards and forwards to office in Whitehall. His logic and his brains cannot supply that intuitive sense of the right thing to do which comes only of dealing with men. Here again I am reluctant to say much. Perhaps the position may most vividly be brought home to our minds by imagining the same in England. Suppose that in England foreigners were ruling, say the Japanese, who committed the province to one of their statesmen who had never been in Europe before, and surrounded him with a group of men of his own race who got their knowledge of the country chiefly from books and papers at Whitehall, who for the most part could not talk the English language, whose unreserved intercourse with Englishmen was limited to a few Japanese-speaking callers in London, and who, when not in London, divided their time between the Scotch Highlands and the Riviera. What sort of government would it be? It might seem admirable to the people in Tokio, but would it to the men of Yorkshire and Cornwall? How long would it last?*

What the composition of a Presidency Government under the existing system ought to be, seems scarcely open to argument. At the head should be, as there generally is, a man of character, trained in the

* There were many foreign conquerors before us in India equally alienated, but then they left the people to themselves after they had got their taxes.

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free and generous life of England. He should be surrounded by men who have served their apprenticeship for many years as administrators of Subdivisions, of Districts, and of Departments or Divisions successively. They should have some experience in Secretariate routine, but it should not have engrossed a large part of their lives. They should bring to their higher place memories of rides in the forest coupes, noting with their own eyes and ears the grievances of the people and the perplexities of the forest officer, hammering out with them the knotty questions of grazing, cattle trespass, local wood supply. They should be able to cast their minds back and walk again with the cultivator over his growing crop, often only half of what it seems. They should be able to stand again in thought in the village school, in the liquor shop, in the railway station, with the *panch* under the village tree. They should have watched the ways of the police in and out of the magistrate's court. They should be able to recall lessons wearily learned, with a habit of mind unconsciously acquired, in meetings of the more educated citizens in the Municipal Hall. Such men —one or two, or more if necessary—should be gathered around the Governor, forming with one other of judicial experience the local Government proper. Having thus secured men who know what they are about, the next problem is to bring them into current touch with their workers and

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through them with the people. The "Holloway's pill" of the Secretariate is to set up a self-contained "department" with its "Inspector-General" at head-quarters, not realising the infinite complexity of the task which government is in these days taking on itself year by year and the varied handling it requires. There are, first of all, what may be called the elemental functions of government, in which no step is possible without affecting the daily habits and happiness of the people, and no wise step possible without an intimate knowledge of them. As such I would class the great agencies known as Land Revenue, Police, Forests, and perhaps Public Works. They are of the essence of government by which society stands or falls. And if they are to harmonise with modern exigencies they must be more or less decentralised. Speaking only of the Bombay Presidency and not of other parts of India, where the conditions may be different, I know of nothing more ominous than the recent tendency to place the Police and the Forests under the control each of one Inspector-General, who cannot really "inspect" every district for even a few hurried days in a year. The two conditions for getting the best work out of men and for bringing Government into contact with the facts are (1) the area entrusted to each Inspector (by whatever name he is called) must be of such a size that he can get a personal grip upon it and the men in it within a year or so, and (2) for the administration

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of his own area he alone, being a selected man, must be accountable to Government direct, bringing the breath of real life into the Council Chamber. No third personality must intervene to dull the edge of responsibility. This does not find favour with the Secretariate, who dearly love an Inspector-General who does their work for them, and only occupies one pigeon-hole in their office instead of many, and by a natural enough mistake they think their personal convenience is synonymous with the public interest. I refer to the Police later on, and would here only mention Forests, for which the local Governments are said, rightly or wrongly, to sigh for a local Inspector-General. At present in each of the Circles is a Conservator working for his own reputation and assured of free access to headquarters for his views and proposals. What more stimulating to individual initiative and a progressive spirit while ensuring harmony with facts? Add to this, inspiration from headquarters, a supremely important factor, and the whole government gains American verve. A few questions will crop up too technical for the Member of Government to decide without more advice, and for discussing these there should be a Forest Board—an ordinary Board of Conservators only—a full Board of Conservators and Commissioners, who should meet round a table yearly or oftener if necessary. Next in order to the above "elemental" duties of Government come the very important, if secondary ones, of Medical

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aid, Education, Agricultural experiment and instruction, Excise, Railways, Jails, for the professional side of every one of which a specialised head is clearly necessary. It is on them that the modern curse of departmentalism has fallen with blighting effect. Get a party of villagers by themselves and persuade them to say out what is their greatest trouble outside their own families. They will not talk of over-assessment, nor yet of oppression by the police. They will say, "O Sahib, in the travelling season the Vaccinator comes, the Sanitary-wallah comes, the Abkari-wallah comes, the Police-wallah comes, the Engineer-wallah comes, the Pani- (Irrigation) wallah comes, the Survey-wallah comes, the Circle-wallah comes, the School-wallah comes, the Lokil- (board) wallah comes, and every one demands of us food, bedding, and service, and where are we to get the money from?" The evil goes much deeper even than that. What the Oriental looks for above everything in the ruling power is solidarity. Split up into unconnected departments, he regards it as dismembered and approaching dissolution. A native subordinate told off to his own little section from which he can scoff at every authority but his own superior, ceases to be, in any broad sense, a servant of the State, *i.e.* as we now put it, of the public. As in private life he plays up to his caste not to society, so in official life he plays up to his department not to Government. The Secretariate has no conception of the trickery, the petty jealousy, the want of

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cohesion, which exists among native subordinates in too many places, producing waste of efficiency and loss of prestige to Government, because there is no co-ordinating authority except the shadowy being called Government in the hills, or, failing that, no cordial fraternity between the various departments as servants of one master. Perhaps as bad an instance as any is the rural doctor. He comes in contact with authority one day in every year when the Civil Surgeon makes a hurried visit, looks at his instruments and papers, and is off again. For the rest of his time, so long as he avoids scandal and sends in Returns that pass muster, he ploughs his own little departmental furrow alone. He might with his opportunities be the idol of the country-side. Every layman who has given quinine away on tour knows how responsive villagers are to those who have real pity for them. As a fact the bulk of the sick folk in many places never go near the Government doctor. The district officer knows it all, but, according to my experience, he gets little encouragement to interfere. On two occasions only I remember making references as a Collector which were met by no response, or by an indignant defence of the "department," as if I were an irresponsible scribbler, and I naturally desisted. If Government knew the facts it would realise that the district officer is virtually the only spur and only check, and would insist on every refusal of his advice by the Surgeon-General being reported to it for orders.

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Concurrent with the growth of departmentalism has been the descent of the Commissioner, for which, if it continues, Government will have to bear a heavy penalty. If properly selected, he is the one man in the Division of matured experience who has been trained to take an all-round view of things, and who, by his position, is able to hold the balance without sectional bias. In the elemental departments he should be a principal agent, and in the secondary nothing of importance should be done without first giving him an opportunity of expressing his opinion, and if he disapproves of any action taken it should be *ipso facto* suspended for the orders of Government. In certain other branches of work, which may be ranked as third class, such as Archæology, Surveys, Customs, Veterinary practice, this last precaution, *i.e.*, reference to Government on a challenge from him, is all that is necessary. I pray, if anyone will hear me, that Government will not maim itself by cutting off what should be its right hand. Let it select carefully at each vacancy the man who by his knowledge of the people and clear judgment is most worthy, and then let it freely consult him in everything except purely professional work. No one asks that he should concern himself whether a dispensary officer is giving the right medicine to a patient or not, but his power to get a lazy or corrupt man removed should not depend on his being able to gain the assent of a distant departmental head who sometimes resents his taking any

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interest in the matter. I am aware that to this, as to much else in this pamphlet, the Secretariate will have an entirely sufficing answer—on paper. It will be said that it lies with the Commissioners themselves to volunteer advice and to initiate reform, and that their representations are always courteously received. Quite so, but it is the spirit that giveth life, and that is wanting. It should *not* lie with the Commissioners themselves. They should be considered the eyes of Government over the whole field and expected to speak freely without the sense which now deters them of being officious. In Bombay, to give their orders permanence and weight they should meet as a Revenue Board twice a year, once at Bombay and once at Poona, for the settlement of matters that require uniformity, such as the conservation of public rights in towns, referred to on pp. 79–80, and many others would be thus jointly treated with immense advantage. Minor and more immediate matters on which consistent action is desired might be treated by post. At present administrative questions are not dealt with on the basis of actuality. Many, amidst a mass of trivialities, scarcely come to the knowledge of the Olympian Government at all. Such as do emerge find their way to a department of the Secretariate, which is only too pleased with itself if it can find a pretext for passing it over to another. Finally, the written reports are collated, precedent (that good servant but bad master in the work of governing)

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hunted up and examined, and certain assertions and logical conclusions arrived at in a Resolution couched in faultless language. The man on the spot can only say that some of them are true and some are not true. It is good essay-writing—much of it would have a chance of a Cobden Club prize at a university—but it is not ruling of men. The European newspapers at the Presidency say "how very able," and the papers at home occasionally take up the cry, and all agree that we English have a genius for governing alien races. All the time the man of realities knows there is as much content and prosperity, because more knowledge, under the go-as-you-please orders of a Native State as under a "policy" thrice tried in the Secretariate fire and carried out by departmental battalions. I do not intend to hold up either the native "bundobust" or the English "policy" as a model. What is wanted is the practical fitness of the one combined with the ordered method of the latter.

II.

I hold the Bombay land-system to be in theory the finest in the world. Without the invocation of Tenancy laws, with which it is necessary to protect the cultivator where a proprietor or middleman is placed over him, he is absolutely secured in the occupation of his land on payment of a moderate, say a half, share of the rent, which is an easy and

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customary method of contributing to the public revenue. He is responsible for himself alone and not for his neighbours. He is free to sub-let or otherwise manage his land in the way he thinks best. He is guaranteed by law the fruits of his own improvements. He may expand or contract his holding and rent-bill, according to his means, by giving up or acquiring field by field, thus having all the benefit of a permanent lease without its responsibilities. By the recent wise intervention of the Government of India he can, in unfavourable seasons, claim remissions adapted to his losses. A status which is enjoyed in Northern India by fortunate individuals or by close communities may be attained in Bombay by every labourer who has money or credit enough and enterprise enough to put a waste field under the plough. In a word, everything is done that law can do to produce and foster a stalwart yeomanry standing on their own land, face to face with the King's Government, dependent on no one, beholden to no one. Indeed, the highest objection to the Zemindari or Malguzari tenure we have created elsewhere is not so much the unjust surrender of the taxpayer's money as the moral one that it has forcibly debased into tenantry the landholders, who were or might have become a race of freemen-proprietors, with those manly qualities which a sense of independence gradually develops.

The enormous initial mistake made by Govern-

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ment of withdrawing from all direct interest in the land, abjuring its own responsibilities as a landlord, and conferring on the ryots a gift of absolute property which they were not yet strong enough to bear, is common to all India. It is one of the main reasons why the people of some Native States are as prosperous as our own though the revenue-demand is higher. The cultivator's right to sell or mortgage is not recognised there, and this constitutes an automatic check upon lending to him and upon pressing him. At the same time, Custom, the palladium of Eastern rights, secures him against ejectment by the State so long as he observes his obligations. What is to be specially regretted in Bombay is that the Government, after obtaining at the cost of much heated discussion a means of partly retracing its steps, was too timid to use it for all it was worth. It is to be supposed that those who resisted the amendment of the Land Revenue Code thought it not undesirable that seventy per cent. of the cultivated area in a district should pass into the possession of moneylenders. That was not the view of the members of Government, and yet, having got with much trouble a weapon into their hands, they faltered in the use of it. All land whatever henceforth given out for cultivation by the Collector should be given without the right to alienate to any one of the non-cultivating classes. Under the orders of the Government of India no advantage was to be taken of the straits into which

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the people were driven by famine, by declaring their land to be forfeited and then re-selling to them with limited rights, but that condition could have been well observed by due restraint in making forfeitures. I am not aware what, if anything, has been done recently, but the first order of the Bombay Government attempted to discriminate between buyers of unoccupied land with capital and buyers without, it being apparently held that the power to alienate could be safely given to one and not to the other. It was branded with the inveterate mistake of basing differential treatment upon inquiry into personal circumstances. It seems as if nothing can convince the Secretariate of the truth known to every practical man, that this merely means giving more power into the capricious if not corrupt hands of the village subordinates.

In actual working of the Bombay land-system the first task is to ascertain the relative value of the fields, and it is doubtful if the existing record is so satisfactory as is generally thought. In Northern India a full fair rent paid by a tenant is taken as a chief basis. In Bombay the sub-tenants are too few to be of any use for the purpose, and hence the Settlement Department set about digging holes and otherwise working up to an estimate of the value of the soil *à priori*. The record as originally framed by its authors consisted of nine classes ranging from 16 or 24 annas as to quality and $1\frac{3}{4}$ cubits of depth to 2 annas and

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¼ cubit. In each class there were to be three orders according to texture. A deteriorating influence or "fault" lowered the soil by a class. The object was to ascertain not what the land did produce, but what in the judgment of the classer it ought to produce—a statement which should itself suggest caution when it is remembered that, with all the great merits of the late survey department, its higher agency was not always competent, nor its lower agency honest. It may be inferred that Government thinks the existing classification satisfactory, as a provision was inserted in section 106 of the Land Revenue Code that it is not to be revised. In the opinion of many who know the land this was at least premature, as the variations in assessment are far from always corresponding with actual out-turn. Such private rentals as there are, and the results of crop experiments, when compared with the assessments field by field, point to the same conclusion. At the best it was an unnecessary surrender of the interests of Government, since it cannot be allowed to prevent the lowering in the scale in cases of proved deterioration, but only a rise, however just, in cases of improvement.

There is a general feeling in Bombay that no trusted agency exists for correcting mistakes of assessment of the land rent in detail. Herein is a weak place which must be made good if the system is to be perfected. The practice has been to send such petitions of appeal as come up to the Commissioner or

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Collector, to the Survey Department for report, and it was well understood that they need not be expected back for at least a year, often for much more. The official feeling was that too much encouragement would bring down a swarm of, often vain, petitions far too numerous for the existing staff to cope with, and the popular feeling was that the Survey Department would not be ready to admit their own mistake. It was too like appealing to a judge against his own decree. This will not appear satisfactory to anyone who is able to put himself in the place of a cottier who finds his rent raised by fifty per cent. without justification obvious to him. It is not surprising that such an increase is resented when it is not based on actual facts of production, but on the *à priori* opinion of perhaps not very competent observers as to what the land could produce if well cultivated. The disinclination to stir up the mud after the work has once been fairly well done was natural, but should not be allowed to weigh against the honour of Government even in small things. There should be some machinery for insuring to a peasant, especially if his rent was raised at the last settlement, sòme independent verification, or at least some clear explanation of the grounds underlying his assessment. It cannot perhaps be expected of the Secretariate that they should appreciate the enormous content it brings to the Oriental ryot to know that his own case has been inquired into, and to have the decision and its reasons

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made clear to him. The word to "sumjao" (cause to understand) sums up the whole art of Eastern administration as distinct from government. It was the weapon in which the older local officers were, above all, skilled, and the comparative disuse of which is fraught with consequences yet to be seen. Even the tenant under the Bengal Zemindar can appeal to the Civil Court, and in Bombay we shall never put ourselves right with the people until after every settlement an independent officer of sympathetic and firm judgment is put on to inquire into cases of alleged hardship with a fresh mind. To a business-like man the task would not be nearly so great as would appear at first sight. Items in a general rise owing to the raising of the maximum rate or the shifting of the village to another group would be dealt with *en bloc.* Individual cases of extraordinary increase, or of excess over neighbouring fields, claim separate inquiry, and ought to get it. It would have caused a hitch in the smooth running of departmental work which would have been abhorrent to the official, but it would have removed the sense of injury from many a mind, and would have cleared away much that hangs in the rear of every settlement. The Survey records now handed over must contain many of these petitions, and I would strongly urge that some such course be taken for disposing of them. The critics of the Bombay system, such as Sir George Campbell, assert the impossibility of dealing directly with

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hundreds of thousands of cultivators, most of them small and poor, and of assuring to each consideration of his rights. I do not agree, but the fact cannot be blinked that the responsibility cast upon Government by a ryotwari system is vastly greater than that of a limited rent-enjoying proprietary.

The land being classified, the villages are arranged into groups chiefly according to convenience of market, and to every group a maximum rate of assessment is applied. This is revised at every settlement, and is therefore a matter of recurrent interest. In considering new rates, it has been the custom to attach too much weight to the ease with which the revenue has been collected; to the rents of land that has been sublet; to sale prices as noted in registered deeds; and to the increase of such property as cattle and carts; whereas the only sure ground of action is the opinion of observant men who know the area and its people. The fact that revenue has been collected without process of law means nothing in face of the various devices which enable the local official to dispense with legal action, and in face of the fact that in normal times it is not so much the occupant as the money-lender who pays, and promptness may only mean that the land is in the hands of a mortgagee who cannot afford to let it go. Rents are delusive in Bombay, where, as a rule, only the lands yielding most profit are let, and good tenants get better terms than those who are likely to give trouble. The inferior

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land is seldom sublet—indeed, it may almost be said that those numerous fields which return only wages of labour, or only a slight rental margin, are invariably cultivated by the proprietor. It is this lower class of land which is said to be most often over-assessed. Very often the lessee is really the mortgagor, and the nominal rent has no connection with the value of the land, but only with the amount of interest due. As for sales, and mortgages which are often sales in disguise, the consideration is greatly inflated by purely accidental circumstances.

With all the inherent virtues of the Bombay system, it bears upon it in practice the trail of the doctrinaire. As already said, the vast congeries of peasant proprietors look to Government to see that no single man's payment is increased without just cause, but the machinery does not always secure it. Another mistake springs from a too close acceptance of an ancient dictum of the Directors' Court in London, that the land should be assessed according to its capabilities, and without reference to the means of the community which cultivates. The authors of the Bombay system were, at any rate, men who worked in the open air. They saw that the pictures of "different rates of profit" and the "fostering of slovenly husbandry," as drawn by a clever scribe, did not represent facts. They saw also that to assess at equal rates a community not long reclaimed from the jungle, and another which inherited the industry and

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skill of centuries, merely because a hole dug in the land of each gave similar results, would be to ruin the one or to spoil the other. Hence, though they obeyed orders by fixing uniform rates, they evaded them when they came across a backward population, and adjusted the burden by making deduction on account of "distance from village," beginning often from the very village gates! * Whether the Koli will ever be equal to the Kanbi, and what are the causes which have prevented him as yet from making more headway, I do not stop to discuss; but this much is certain, that the difference is almost as great as ever, and should be recognised, as it was by the older men, and still is in Northern India. To the Bombay Secretariate, however, all such tricks are intolerable. We must have symmetry. We must have science. We have nothing to do with the men, but only with the land. If the Koli can only be "bolstered up" (a favourite phrase of the Indo-Manchester school) by fictions, let him go back to his jungle. So long as this unhuman spirit prevails over its working, the Bombay system will never be the success it might be. Another fallacy which, I am sorry to say, we owe to the authors of the system, and which the local Government has not even yet after years of disaster and pressure unreservedly given up, is that the assessment

* It need scarcely be added that this would eventually necessitate restriction on alienation to prevent the land from passing to classes for whom it was not intended.

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should be so regulated that the ryot must pay in a bad year from the savings of a good one. If it was said that he did not, it was retorted that he ought to, and there was an end of it. The Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Commission in 1892 put its finger on this, but its suggestions were indignantly repudiated at Mahabaleshwar in a spirit which has not yet, I fear, been completely exorcised. The ground fact is that you cannot rule successfully whole nations by telling them what they ought to do, but only by foreseeing what they will do.

Recent land-revenue policy in general has been shaped by the Government of India, and the attitude of the Bombay Government may best be judged from their treatment of special classes such as the Talukdars (Landlords) of Gujerat, with whom they have a freer hand. These men have historical and personal claims second to those of no proprietary landlords in India, but they have not always found favour in the eyes of their rulers. For years they were treated as mere leaseholders. Then came a period of relief, but afterwards they fell again upon evil days. Government asserted a claim to seventy per cent. of the rental at a time when the "Saharanpur Rules" had reduced the revenue to be taken from the proprietors of the N.W.P., an inferior class, to fifty per cent. of the rental. Nor was this all, for the net assets of the Gujerat landlords were assumed to be the assessments fixed by the Survey, which were on many

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estates egregiously excessive. It was persistently represented by local officers that the position of these ancient gentry was really made worse than that of the ordinary cultivator, who could throw off those portions of his holding which did not pay; and when it finally was shown that some estates under official management did not produce enough to meet current expenses, apart from the subsistence of the Talukdar, Government was moved to issue orders marked by commendable breadth of view and sympathy. In one important point I think they missed an opportunity. Among the ordinary cultivators, next to a trusted agency for verifying individual assessments and a fixed rule for remissions, the most popular measure would be a declaration of the grounds on which alone the land revenue demand may be raised. I am aware of the objection to tying down the governments of the future in ignorance of how conditions may change, and recognise its weight in general; but in my humble opinion a more statesmanlike instinct would have recognised that to subject the Talukdars to a demand based on the survey assessment, that is, on the variable views of the government of the day, was not worthy treatment of a venerable class. Their antecedents, and the status accorded to their brethren, the chiefs of Kathiawar, suggests a far stronger case for a permanent tribute than has been held good in other parts of India. Such a proposal is out of court in these days, but it would have been hailed as an

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appropriate recognition of an honourable tenure if Government had seen its way to declaring that an enhancement of the demand should only take place on increase of rents, cultivation, or prices. The actual effect on the tribute would probably have been nil, but the formulated concession would have been highly valued, as placing these descendants of kings on a plane of their own. It would have been a magnetic touch which it is perhaps too much to expect of a Secretariate.

III.

The great task which lies at the doors of every provincial Administration is that of universal education. The people are getting ready for it. Government are committed to it. The only real difficulty is the cost. The local Boards, with their inelastic revenues, can go no farther, and with all the other demands upon the provincial funds, it will be a serious strain on them if they have to supply the balance, even with occasional grants from India.

A step which would at once set free a useful sum for education proper would be to abandon once for all the system under which Government takes upon itself through its Public Works Department to build standard school houses. It will never be possible to supply every village with one, and a very good thing too, for there is no sound sense in erecting for the children's

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school a building so much more pretentious than the houses in which the parents live, in which they themselves were born, and marry, and live and die. "Nothing "can be more simple than a Hindu school," says Forbes in his "Oriental Memoirs" at the beginning of last century, "which is usually under a thatched shed open "on three sides" (vol. i. p. 75) or "in the open air on "the shady side of the house. The scholars sit on mats "or on cow-dung floors" (vol. ii. p. 506). As, moreover, the modern "bungalows" can only be built here and there, it is not just to spend on the luxury of special villages money that is raised in the form of a cess from all. Lastly, it is entirely inconsistent with the principle of trusting to the co-operation of the villagers, of which so much is said and so little done. If there is one thing in which the Commune could and would unite spontaneously, conveniently, and effectively, it is the provision of shelter for their boys when learning their lessons. What happens at present is that when a school is to be established the Assistant Deputy Inspector (as if it was his business!) comes to the village and, in consultation with the headman, hires a house at an exorbitant rent (which is only what is expected for a Government purpose, but is strangely out of place in a village concern), to be followed some time after, if the village is lucky, by a building of finished masonry at any cost from Rs. 1000 upwards. What *ought* to happen is that the department should pay and assign a master and staff to every village

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where the people undertake to provide a house. If properly handled the poorest community will only need a grant of timber to help them through. This division of the burden would be resented at first by the larger and well-to-do villages which now get accommodation at the public expense, but wisely and firmly carried out it would stimulate both interest in education and corporate life. For the villagers, if left to themselves, could provide a house at a fraction of what the Government department has to pay. It also stands to reason that they would under such circumstances be allowed an absolutely free hand to make their own arrangement without fussy interference, the Deputy Inspector having no word in the matter unless only he found the conditions were insanitary. The teaching would be under the control of the department, the premises under that of the village on the understanding that, if the latter were not kept up to a fair standard, the former would be stopped. The results would shock an Inspector straight from Europe, just as if he walked in the fields he would look with pity on a useful native plough; but to the villagers the School would become a valued possession to be proud of. Like most things worth doing, the introduction of the system would not be easy, the chief hindrance to it, as to all attempts to trust the people, coming not so much from high officers as from subordinates who hate to surrender their power of meddling. Of course, too, there would be loud clamour at first from the

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people, for it is now impossible to introduce any reform without that, especially one that adjusts a burden to the right back. It might be at first made known that no new schools would be sanctioned except on condition of the people being responsible for the house, and this would pave the way for an extension of the principle to all. Its great merit, besides harmony with the ways of the country and a recognition that education is a personal concern of the people themselves, is that it would help the financing of universal instruction.

The fundamental reason why this scheme would, with patience and tact, succeed, is that parents are eager to educate their boys. They are not so to educate their girls, and hence, for a long time to come, female schools will have to be housed at the expense of the State. It is also, I am sure, recognised that in every detail native sentiment will have to be carefully studied, and it is with a desire to help, not criticise, that I invite attention to the girls' school-house. It is usually in a public situation, with front doors and windows on a high road or in a compound adjacent. It is thus at all times, and especially on the occasion of an event such as a lady's visit, in full view of every passer-by and of every loafer who chooses to stand and stare. So long as this is so the school will never be a resort for girls up to the age of fifteen or sixteen, and for respectable ladies of the village to go in and out as visitors. The

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possibilities of it as a rallying-ground for the children, young wives, and mothers are great, but they will never come within sight unless the right building is provided. It should be on the simple plan of an old-time native house—a square of unadorned brick or mud, with a door in front, the outer walls without any other opening except perhaps ventilators high up, and the inner sides open to the light and air of a centre courtyard, which should be bright with a few flowers, and contain space for simple gymnastics. It would be cool, healthy, and free from outside interference. It might be cheap also, for there need be no floor of stone, or roof of cut timber, or compound walls. A few chicks to protect against the sun and rain when necessary, would complete the simple equipment. Chairs, benches, and tables at the public expense would be as much out of place as high-heeled shoes. So also ostentatious prize-givings, open to everyone of whatever sex and position. All that is really wanted is a homely building in which the mistress and her staff may carry on their work under the eyes of the neighbouring ladies, with the retirement and outward decorum so dear to the respectable native.

Perhaps nothing so stamps our schools as foreign as the absence from them of all real interest in the people's Music. How many of us, with no unkindly feeling, close our ears with anguish, or take credit for passive endurance when the singing begins. It is

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often discordant by any test, and small wonder, since trained teaching is not even recognised as desirable by the department in Bombay. In the Primary examination for boys, "songs" are merely a Kindergarten item, and cease altogether to appear above Standard I. For girls' schools, "singing in unison" is made more of, but a similar contempt for native music as a fine art is shown by its entire omission in the Marāthi rules above Standard III. Yet there is no greater power in the land. Everywhere the people delight to sing or to listen to song. The dourest missionary sect has learned the value of "Bhajans" or "Kirtans." I have myself seen a drawing-room full of educated Indians politely applaud a charming English song, but wake up, as if by a touch of electricity, at the native song which followed. Both villagers and townsmen dearly love the folk-music of their own land, now cheery, now sad, now passionate, now a vague and wordless voice seeming to come from that inner mind of which we know so little.* Those few Europeans who have studied the Hindu system have been fascinated, now with its plaintive simplicity, now with its wild originality. The makers of Resolutions and Codes little dream how they might reach the hearts of the people, but even they will perhaps admit that a dominant foreign race in England that

* *See* a charming little "Account of the Hindu System of Music," by Annie C. Wilson (Gulab Singh & Sons, Lahore; Simpkin, Marshall & Co., London).

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shrugged its shoulders at "Home, sweet Home," and "Auld Robin Gray" would not be going the way to make itself liked. I do not propose a professional master in the schools, for very obvious reasons, but why not put Music on as honoured a level as Gymnastics, and adopt the same means of procuring a member of the general staff who can add some knowledge of it to his other qualifications? In my humble opinion, it would show a much keener perception of the possible than training him to teach Agriculture to the cultivator.

Passing to higher education, it is a pity that the one class of public posts in the whole country which has been taken altogether out of the hands of Englishmen should have been the Head-masterships of High Schools. Instead of being the first to go they should have been the last. Every wise man will admit that the future of a country depends largely on its boys, especially those of the better classes, learning the lessons of truth, self-restraint, reverence, courage, and manners; and no candid man will deny that at present there is no one in India who can teach them so well as the right sort of Englishman who brings with him the spirit of the public school. The absence of such is an injury to young India. It is also a loss to the empire, for the blank ignorance of Englishmen, too often growing into aversion, which possesses the average middle-class native would not be so likely to exist if the latter carried about with him the memory

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and influence of a single true friend and master of his boyhood, belonging to the race.

It is curious that the Educational Department, which in its primary sphere sets a fine example of harmonious and productive co-operation with district officials, should in its higher walks be aloof. If there is one agency more than another in which the members of the central Government ought to take direct personal interest, in which they ought to enlist the sympathies of all their officers as in an imperial concern, it is that of the higher schools and colleges. What is their tone and influence? Are they worked on the right methods? by the right men? Are they building up a strong and loyal race of citizens? If there is any heart-searching by Government on these things it is confined to the "department" and quite hidden from common men. I was for five years Commissioner at Ahmedabad, which contains among other institutions a Normal College for training vernacular schoolmasters. Its importance can scarcely be overrated, for out of it men spread every year into the nooks and corners of the province to be the vehicles of knowledge to the people. On them it largely depends whether the next generation is to be wise or foolish. One would have thought that under an organised Government it would have been a place in which the Commissioner, the Collector, and others—the men at first-hand contact with realities—would have been encouraged, nay required, to take a constant

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interest. As a matter of fact we never entered its doors. I take shame to myself for it, having no doubt, from the experience of one visit made for a special purpose, that we should have been treated with all courtesy by every one, from the Director downwards. But that does not absolve the members of Government for their indifference. If there had been anyone at headquarters with his hand intelligently on the levers, surely the Commissioner would have been occasionally referred to, and given to understand that he was expected to say freely what he thought of things. Afterwards when, in a changed official position, I did visit a Normal School (not in the Bombay Presidency), I found no one even to call the roll at night but one of the young men themselves, and the dormitory hung round with the *Kal* and *Kesari* newspapers, which were apparently the only light literature on which they spent their savings out of the stipend they received from Government. In this case, among other reforms, it was wisely suggested by the Director that a board of visitors should be appointed with definite responsibilities. It is not, however, so much particular arrangements that are wanted as the entire abandonment of the departmentalism which separates the most potent agency of the day, viz. higher education, from the close cognisance of the general administration. It is the spirit in which, not long ago, a Government of India Commission on Technical Education went scampering through the country without even

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informing the chief local officers of their intended arrival.

The general lines laid down for the advancement of Agricultural knowledge seem entirely correct. My only fear is that the true teachers will be prejudiced by that general but fallacious idea that the elements of Agriculture as a business can be safely taught to the skilled cultivator or his sons in the village school and garden through the Brahmin master. "For the pur-"pose of imparting intelligent instruction . . . all school-"masters are to be given a year's agricultural training, "with practical illustration and demonstration, at the "Normal School." In former days all Government effort at teaching the cultivator failed because it was entrusted to amateurs, and the new era is not free from a trace of the same error. Some of us have a vivid memory of how Sir Richard Temple formed agricultural classes in the High Schools of Bombay Presidency, each of them equipped with a so-called expert and a piece of land for model cultivation. I well remember the fifty per cent. crops raised at a dead loss on the school land at Surat in contrast with the seventy-five or hundred per cent. crops around, and the mockery of the countryside at the attempts of the "Sirkar" (Government) to teach the Kunbis (cultivators) their business. The harm done by that ill-advised attempt, the prejudice it created against the guidance of Government officers, has hardly yet been dissipated by the success of the admirable little Govern-

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ment farm now run at the same place, under a really trained man, on correct lines. At this time wise men, who would not think of putting the schoolmaster on to teach the elements of Surgery or of Law or of Shoemaking, propose to give him a plot of land at his Training College to potter around for a few months, and then send him out to teach the elements of farming to people who have inherited the skill of centuries. The object is said to be only to enable them to expound the agricultural text-book; and this would be right enough if we could be sure that a scheme will work out in practice along and within the lines laid down for it, or if we could secure that the villagers will understand the master's position as they would understand it in England. We cannot. Either the master will content himself with explaining literally the lessons of the book, in which case he might have saved himself the trouble and Government the expense of his "training," or he will pose as an authority and by his mistakes bring ridicule on himself and those behind him. It is a sound educational principle that the special profession by which a boy is to earn his living, whether it be Farming or Shoemaking or Medicine or Law, should have no part in the curriculum of the general school. If he is to cultivate, let his faculties be prepared with that object. Let him be taught to dissect a plant, to use his eye and head and hand on natural objects, to understand maps and accounts. But for the profession itself he

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should go to experts, to his father, and then to the demonstration farm of his district, or, if that does not exist, to the experimental farm of the larger area. The new Agriculture is too serious a business to allow of smattering in the accredited teacher.

There is another line of activity which trenches on Forestry as well as Agriculture. Is it creditable that, though we have possessed, for instance, Gujerat—a garden province—for a century, it can at this day produce nothing that the outside world will buy except inferior cotton? It has even less to show than it had, for we learn from travellers there in the eighteenth century of groves of sandalwood and fields of irrigated cotton, all of which have disappeared. In Ceylon, where the efforts of Government have been stimulated by European planters, the island has within living memory been successively planted with coffee, with cinchona, with tea, and now the rubber-tree is coming on. As one crop failed another was found to take its place. Alongside this is the fact that the Governments in India have at their command as capable a body of men as have any landlords in the world in the persons of their forest officers, most of them keen scientists, vigorous in mind and body, and ready to help in an advance. The use, however, found for them is as timber merchants for the growth and sale at a profit of the ordinary woods of the country—most necessary work but not enough to satisfy the modern ideal. Research and experiment are not positively

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discouraged, but the initial impetus is not given from headquarters. Scope should be afforded by establishing at the centre of every Forest division an unambitious experimental garden to which, failing a perfect collection in the capital city, should be attached a simple building containing specimens of such local forest produce as can be turned to the use of man, both in the living plant (in the garden) and in the form suitable for commerce (in the building). At present a stranger coming into a district, whether bent on science or business, is presented with no means of ascertaining its resources. This itself is a reproach to a civilised government, which is not to be explained away by want of funds, for the whole thing would be cheap. Most important, however, would be the field given to the forest officer of ideas and perseverance in the experimental garden. He would chiefly work it up in the comparative leisure of the rains, but would keep his eye on it throughout the year, and would of course require an intelligent subordinate in immediate charge, who might also combine with it other work.

The Government of Bombay decline to move on these lines until they can obtain "a strong and adequately equipped staff of experts." This is very well, though it is inconsistent in the mouth of a Government which proposes to teach agricultural improvement through the village schoolmaster. The point is that in some of their forest officers they

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already possess experts equal to any to be got from Europe, and with more knowledge of the country, and if they were up to the times, and resolute to press on, they would utilise these men. There are many of them on whom it would be a libel to suggest they have not the time or inclination to do interesting and productive work of this kind, and their gifts should be turned to greater account. Most of those new products which have enriched a growing country in the past have been due to individual endeavour, on a small scale—witness potatoes in Europe, cinchona, tea. The stringy and turpentiny mango has become the perfect "Alphonse" through culture by the Portuguese, who had no costly horticultural institution to work with. The plantain has been greatly improved within my own time, and so might the custard apple, guava, and corindar, which only need persistent skill to become delicious fruits. So little is this present to the mind of Government in Bombay that until quite recently if a man of horticultural tastes kept up a garden next his residence he was charged for it the same heavy fine as if he had built upon it. Besides a general reluctance to go ahead, the fear is that money will be wasted by trusting individual officers, and nothing horrifies the Secretariate so much as that. We have already seen how a whole country-side was deprived of its natural drink rather than allow a concession which might be abused with a loss of say Rs. 10,000; so all the keen men of a depart-

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ment are to be denied a chance because there may be some among them who do not come up to expectations. It does not seem to occur that of say five gardens if four were mismanaged (a most unlikely event) and one really useful step forward made in the fifth, the net gain would be well worth the aggregate money spent. As a matter of fact, to a Government that knows its men, those with a genius for experiment soon make themselves known, and they alone need be trusted with the small sum proposed. That is what the Americans would do if they had no money for higher flights. Meanwhile the country stagnates. The thing that can be done is not done, and Government contentedly confines its experts, trained in the best schools of Europe, to the work of growing and selling bamboos and teak, as they might have done in the days of Aurangzib.

An institution that might well take up a place in the line of advance is the Jail Garden. With disciplined labour and supervision available, when not limited by departmental restrictions; with a supply of night-soil manure, and usually with a good well-watered soil, it might show its district how to grow fruit and vegetables. All that is wanted is that the Agricultural Department should be linked with the Jail Department as authoritative adviser. An expert lent for a year would start among the prisoners a succession of trained gardeners who would thus acquire an art more likely to be practically useful to them and their

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country after release than weaving or basket-making.

IV.

Municipalities have, considering their difficulties, acquitted themselves well. How many of their committees have not, and still do not, contain a single native member who has ever seen or heard of a well laid-out town of modern type, or in whose moral outlook civic virtue has ever had a place! A very heavy burden has been cast upon them by (1) the long list of their liabilities, and (2) the absence of any intimate interest in their doings at headquarters. A huge cantle of the responsibilities hitherto borne by the general Government was cut off, and thrown to them to make what they could of it with little subsequent sign of sympathy or solicitude except fragmentary criticism in annual Resolutions and the occasional and individual energy of Collectors and Commissioners. It may be forgotten that even in England, until guidance was given through the Local Government Board, the experiment of local self-government was doubtful, and in India far closer touch, as distinct from control is needed. In some cases in India interference has only served to make the task more difficult. The Municipality of Surat, for instance, having, by a judicious combination of saving and borrowing, provided itself, at a cost of over 12 lakhs, with protective

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works against flood, and a fine system of waterworks, set itself to the vital project of town drainage. For this purpose it had laboriously piled up a reserve of Rs. 1,28,079, when plague came, and Government insisted on money being poured out like water to the amount of over 3 lakhs, of which they were only reimbursed a little over a lakh. Is it any wonder if all heart is taken out of them?

In nothing is a want of personal knowledge and sympathy more displayed than in this abandonment of the Municipalities to themselves. The Secretariate will not understand what I mean, and will resent the imputation that Government has not done its duty by them. Of course it has done its "duty." It has reproved them when they quarrelled, when they failed to comply with the law, or, worst of all, when they muddled their finance; but one looks in vain for any general help to these inexperienced men in municipal polity for wise co-ordination of their work, or even for first-hand perception of their needs and difficulties. It will be easy to quote pronouncements in apparent contradiction of all this. It is the *spirit* of uninterested aloofness of which every man of Mofussil affairs must be often conscious. Even he may not always realise the breach in Oriental traditions involved in the abjuring by Government of all part in urban enterprise. The Indian habit of looking to Government for leadership in every public movement is not due only to lack of

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energy, but also to a feeling, once of great force, that it is indecorous for a private person to take any step that may affect the whole community except at the invitation, or at least with the sanction of the ruler. It will be said that the oversight of Municipalities is entrusted to the Commissioners who are their responsible advisers next above the Collectors. It is quite true that a strong man as Collector or Commissioner may promote an idea or a project, but it is never regarded as more than a personal "fad," not to last beyond his time. He is an individual who comes and goes, with none of the permanence and weight of an institution such as Government is, or such as the Commissioners acting as a Board might be. The general inspiration should come from the ruling power in consultation with the Commissioners, who, in their turn, should confer with their Collectors, if possible round a table.

A few instances may make my meaning clear. If explained and encouraged by Government as an object of State policy, there is no reason why every town should not become a centre of tree-culture. The Mofussil Municipal Councillor has no idea (how should he?) that in German towns* every public area—the pleasure-grounds, hospital compounds, school grounds, squares, and street corners—is planted with trees under the control of the municipal staff, who, by a judicious and non-destructive harvesting of the produce,

* *See* Shaw's "Municipal Government in Europe," p. 328.

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are able to keep up lawns and paths, and even pay all their own salaries and expenses. The public garden of the Mofussil—which is the Municipal Councillor's one way of embellishing his town—with its low-paid "mali" and inefficient staff, its beds of straggling flowers and weeds, its shabby flower-pots and shabbier benches, is a depressing place and positively unpleasant to sit in till the sun is down. The kindly shade of a clump of trees at every available point, with grass, if the atmosphere is humid enough, and seats interspersed, would be cheap and pleasant to the eye. If the inside of the town is so crowded and crammed as to contain no space, what more appropriate than to take up one or more plots of land in the immediate outskirts and transform them into municipal groves of mangoes, almonds, jambus, neems, with seats for the rest and shelter of travellers in the heat, and for the evening resort of young and old? The rearing of trees is a religious duty in India, which, with other forms of piety, is dying out.* No private person plants trees now except to make a profit out of fruit; but there are many elderly men who would count it a privilege to supervise such work for the public in the last years of life. What is first wanted is the initiation of the State

* "It is a general practice to plant mango trees and dig a "well. The well and the copse are married, a ceremony at "which all the village attends and large sums often expended. "The well is the husband." (Forbes' "Oriental Memoirs," temp. end of eighteenth century.)

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in the form of advice, which should not be withheld, because the Anglo-Saxon race is accustomed to do without it.

Another concern which the Municipal Councillor does not of himself know how to handle, but in which a central government might stir up effective action all along the line, is the utilisation of the sewage of small towns. The hot sun of India, Nature's great deodoriser and disinfectant, and the crying need of manure constitute special conditions which call for original and practical treatment. Interesting experiments in the purification of sewage by bacteriological methods are being made at such places as Poona and Ahmedabad, but the crude treatment still adopted elsewhere is not very creditable to our administration. Something better might and ought to be achieved by uniting active and sympathetic interest and assistance.

In Great Britain the larger Municipalities are doing brilliant work for their taxpayers by profitable undertakings, such as tramways, gasworks, electric lighting, waterworks, or by granting the goodwill for a limited term and so securing deferred revenue. It is a phase of municipal management altogether unknown to the worthy citizen of the Mofussil; and here again he would welcome a lead. Already cases have occurred of water brought to a town at the expense of the taxpayer and sold to householders and factory owners at below the cost instead of at a rate which, while not unduly high, would return a good income. The im-

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morality of this is not plain to the Municipal Councillor, and he needs to be taught it.

Municipalities again are sometimes saddled with more responsibility than they are fit for in the laying out for posterity of new streets and suburbs. Here again no strong overhand supplies them with an ideal. They have no guide unless the individual Commissioner or Collector for the time being has definite views and enforces them. To this day how many streets are laid out without even a footpath! The modern town of wide streets (in a tropical land cool and shady lanes and alcoves should also intervene), of air-spaces, swimming-baths, seats and rests for head-loads, playgrounds for young and old, public music, trees and turf, never appear to the worthy Bunnia citizen even in a dream, and what wonder if he lets the commonplace, unrelieved rows of houses or huts grow up without a suspicion that he is neglecting his duty?

Most of all is the weight of central authority needed to create a sense of the sacredness of public property in land. That of private property is sometimes carried beyond all reason. After the great fire of 1889 in Surat new widened streets were left incomplete in despair because of the exorbitant sums awarded by the Civil Court for setting back burned-down houses, and that although, owing to the improved thoroughfare, the value of the frontage was actually enhanced by the change. I have known more than one case where it has been necessary to allow a meshwork of narrow and

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noisome gulleys to be rebuilt after a fire as they were, because of the hundreds of expensive, pettifogging suits which an attempt to lay out the area afresh would have occasioned. In sharp contrast with this is the facility with which private persons are allowed to encroach upon public land. In many Municipalities money is spent every year on widening and improving the line of streets, which is more than counterbalanced by a persistent filching by householders of the roadway, generally by throwing out doorsteps and verandahs. In too many of the latter cases, owing to laxity of inspection, the theft does not come to light until long afterwards. The offender then alleges ancient possession, refuses to clear, and threatens litigation, whereupon the Municipality weakly yields and proposes to compromise by accepting a payment of purchase-money. A bit of spare land, so long as it is not wanted for actual traffic to and fro, is an object of greed to every neighbour. The Municipality is too often not above selling it for the sake of the money, and the Divisional Commissioner's sanction, which is necessary under the law, can usually be got by waiting, for, in the absence of authoritative principles or the concerted action of a Board, it depends on the opinion of the incumbent for the time being. A public conscience is needed which will recognise that land vested in the Municipality for public use, even if it is a mere air-space, is held by them as a sacred trust, and that they have no right whatever to surrender it

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to private possession, nor have government officers any moral right to sanction their doing so. In remote parts of the country the belief still prevails that land once held by a Brahmin cannot be transferred to other hands without an attendant curse, and it would be well if land devoted to the public could gain the same religious sanctity. Even public domains which have been for centuries lungs to a town are coveted by the builder, who little by little gains a footing in them. To take an instance which has its counterpart in almost every town I know, the Bhudder in Ahmedabad, the ancient government keep, the only space inside the city where games can be played, and which ought to be more sacred than a cathedral close, has been broken down for a Telegraph Office, and very nearly given up piecemeal in recent years for Police Lines, for a High School, for a branch of the Bank of Bombay. Such land ought to be inviolate.

The truth is that, although under the Municipal law establishments were set up, and organised cleaning, road repairs, and primary education introduced, little way has been made in the average town since that first outset. A hospital or school may have been built, and private persons driven out by plague may have founded a new suburb; but on the whole the smaller towns are just as unsightly, just as slovenly, just as unwholesome as they were thirty years ago. The State, without whose impetus nothing is done, has thrown them over. Yet the town of the future

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would be a fascinating vision to an Administration that took an interest in its people while keeping intact the principle of self-government. The ideal would not be to find the town of brick and leave it of marble, nor even to find it of mud and leave it of brick. That was a boast with a tinge of barbarism in it, and we have got far above it now. What we have to do is to accept the conditions—the baking sun, the simple and conservative people, their wishes and customs, and the slender means at their command—and to get them harnessed to many sorts of well-considered endeavour to make urban life healthier and brighter. One cannot help thinking that the Americans would have brought versatility to make up for want of money.*

* I repudiate on behalf of district officers such mischievous misstatements as this of Sir Henry Cotton: "In the majority "of cases the proceedings of (Municipal and other) Committees "benevolently designed by Government . . . . are conducted "throughout with hectoring language and in a bullying tone; "and a native Commissioner who ventures to evince any inde- "pendence of character or to oppose any opinion of the chair- "man may consider himself lucky if he escapes without personal "contumely or insult." ("New India," p. 46.) As if the problem of modern India were not difficult enough without complicating it with calumniation of Englishmen, most of whom, thank God! are still too proud to vindicate themselves in public meetings and otherwise, except by doing the "duty of going on." No one regrets more bitterly than I do the conduct towards Indians of some silly subalterns and even some grown-up men and women for whom there is less excuse, but they are not the administrators of the land. Among the thousands of local government meetings held every year in the towns and

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One sign that civic patriotism is beginning to grow will be when people remember their town when distributing money after the death of their relations. This is an occasion when all well-to-do families in India are liberal, and the detachment of the Municipality from the people on one side as from Government on the other could not be better proved than by the fact that no one remembers it at such a time. The practice in the Central Provinces of publishing gifts of below Rs. 500 for public purposes in a list in the *Gazette*, and of over Rs. 500 in a special Notification with a special letter of thanks, is to be recommended.

It has been already said that Government leaves it to the Commissioners to advise and stimulate Municipalities having no time for attention to detail. That is entirely true, but it does not mean that they may dissever themselves and stand aloof. The

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districts of a Continent, it would be strange if faults of temper and training did not crop up on both sides; but to describe them as usual is as unjust as it would be to describe the local councillors of England as rowdies because occasionally one or two of them forget themselves. I have a memory of five years of a Municipality in which the acutest differences of opinion prevailed the whole time on questions of taxation and progress, but throughout many strenuous debates no one, either European or Indian, let fall a discourteous word. That could not be easily matched in Europe. And it is a type. In writing as he does, Sir H. Cotton certainly makes good his contention, so far as his own example can do it, that the Englishman is not more fitted by fair-mindedness for high places than the average Indian.

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average Commissioner will be what Government makes him. Official service does not include originality among the many high qualities which it often develops, and the spirit of routine gains power over him from the sense that if he does depart from the line tacitly set to him he will do so with little authority. If Government does not know and care, no one else will for long. The latest Resolution on Municipal affairs in Bombay in my hands is that of 14th March, 1904, on the Reports for 1902–3. It contains forty-three paragraphs, almost every one devoted to a subtraction of the year's figures item by item from those of the year before, or *vice versa.* I am constrained to say there is not a trace of living force, not a sign of intimate knowledge or interest from end to end, and if the reports and action of subordinates take a similar tone it is not surprising. It might have been written, every word, by a Babu who had never stirred out of his office, with no other qualification than may be derived from study of a School Arithmetic. There is no attempt to turn things inside out. What sort of inspiration is to be got by Commissioners or by any one else from a review like this?

Closely connected with local self-government is the much-discussed Village. I cannot but think that more might be done to bring these communities more into fusion with the Local Board system. Perhaps the framing of the Budget, *i.e.* the distribution of the funds

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and the execution of works of wide importance, are best left to the Sub-divisional and District Committees, based though they are upon an artificial system of election; but local expenditure might well be left more often than it is to the people of the place, who are more interested in it than any one else. They ought, in short, to be the "Works Committee" of the Bombay Rules, an uncouth foreign term which ought to be swept away. The headman and chosen colleagues ought to be responsible that the work is done well and cheaply, and that anything going wrong is brought to light. A village that could not find men to undertake so much should just be left without a grant. Surely the men who can build their own houses and their own field wells, can do the same for their village well, which is just as necessary for their health and comfort, and just as much their concern. Yet so little was the principle of associating them at one time recognised, that I have known masonry work in a well to have been begun and finished before their eyes, though a permanent spring had not been reached, without their saying a word about it, and without their being expected to do so. Most district officers admit that the above course is possible in the more advanced villages, but doubt the safety of trying it in those which are backward. I am inclined to think they are over-cautious, having seen the alacrity with which even the aboriginal races have set to work in some villages to build for themselves rustic school-

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houses. It is essential, however, that they should be boldly left to themselves, except for advice only. The touch of the fussy subordinate will wither everything up. Also a village which has wasted public money or allowed it to be wasted should be passed over in the allotment of future grants, and, of course, should be allowed no funds to rectify bad work. The fitness of leaving the people to provide their own school-room has been already dwelt upon. Invariably the completion of any important work should be followed by presenting a puggaree, or some other little object of value, to those who deserve it, or better still by inscribing their names on the structure or an adjacent stone.

Village Sanitation Acts provide an embryo municipality supposed to be adapted to the needs of a smaller and simpler community. Now what the villager hates is direct taxation and an establishment of official servants with the authority, however vague, of Government behind them. They regard the latter as expensive, inefficient and impudent, or at least independent. I cannot but think a legislature in touch with the people would have included in the Village Act optional provisions enabling the Panch, in lieu of contribution and establishments, to compel each and every householder to keep his house clean both front and back by private arrangement with one of the village sweepers, and also to give his quota in labour if he chose when any public work

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had to be done, such as cleaning the tank, emptying the well, or filling up a hole. This would have been working up from ancient village custom, instead of down from a foreign and not yet assimilated institution.

Besides local fund works and sanitation works, every village where it is possible should be assigned a bit of forest to manage as a fuel and fodder reserve in strict compliance with rules framed by the Forest Department, but without any further interference by the latter. Fencing should be paid for by the District Board if the law allows. This is far better than additional "gairan" (communal grazing land) for which many hanker. On the whole there is no mode of disposing of land so wasteful and demoralising as giving it for "gairan." Either persons of influence engross it, or it is thrown open to the first cattle who come, and who trample and destroy the springing grass, which no attempt is made to conserve.

Lastly, if any proposal to resuscitate the Village Panch is ever taken in hand, I hope it will not be forgotten that it is not fair to throw on any Oriental body the sole initiation of reform. The village watchman, servant of the village and paid in land, but removable by Government, is the bottom stone of the system in most parts of the Bombay Presidency, which may well be envied in that respect by other provinces. The Patel families have for the most part an inherited position and are consequently honoured.

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The only constituent necessary to complete the edifice is the backing of Government with advice and control. Then we may hope to have, not a revival of the old Panch, painted so often in theatrical colours, but the agent of cruel injustice to the unpopular and the uninfluential, but a popular agency regulated by a steady over-hand. Very much will depend on the self-restraint and broadness of mind to be inculcated by Government on its officers. They should at the outset give advice, but never interfere merely because the Panch, in their judgment, might act better. Independence means nothing unless it includes some power to go wrong, and the Collector should not move except to prevent real injustice or wanton waste.

In the matter of air space and ventilation, Government might well set a better example in its own buildings. There are standard plans for the structure of the most frequent, but none for the compound, which is consequently often too small for the business that accumulates in it, and—what is more—for future extension of the premises. It often does not seem to enter the mind of the promoters that in these days new departments and agencies will from time to time require new rooms, and expanding offices will require larger rooms. Finally, some of the rooms of the standard plans, notably the Magistrates' Courts in the Mofussil, are too small already, and when fully occupied for an important case can give no accom-

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modation for the public, and even without their presence must be close and unwholesome. The chief immediate object, however, should be to secure, while land is still fairly cheap in most places, spacious and open surroundings for every block of public offices.

V.

A bad system, in adherence to which Bombay stands almost alone in India, is that of Tolls on Provincial and Local Board roads. They are irritating enough to the man who has money in his pocket: how much more to him that has none? There is probably no equally small piece of the public revenue that is collected with a tithe of the annoyance. It is no uncommon thing to see in a corner of the toll-house a heap of garments or other petty goods left by impecunious cartmen until they can return with the proceeds of their load of wood or grass. In level country, vehicles will make a wide *détour* to avoid paying the charge, though only an anna or two, and attempts will be made to catch them by subsidiary bars, when will follow a dodging game in which the "Sirkar" does not always come off successful, and never with dignity. On the bridge over a difficult river or on a cutting which makes a hill route passable there is less to be said, because the traveller sees a visible return for his money, but on other roads it

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sometimes happens that he does not even get sufficient repairs. Finally, the system is open to a grave objection which does not weigh in Bombay so much as it ought, that it involves one more set of inferior agents, who exact and interfere if they do not molest. I believe, as a matter of fact, that the turnpike gate on the ordinary road has become obsolete everywhere in the civilised world except in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. In the Central Provinces a cartman may go from end to end without an anna in his pocket. In Bengal tolls were abolished in 1880 and have again and again been strongly condemned. In the United Provinces there are none on ordinary roads. In the Punjaub there are none. The excuse for them in Bombay is that the money is needed to keep up the roads, and that those who use them should in fairness pay for them. These arguments have not been thought of sufficient weight to counterbalance those on the other side, which are of more force in an Oriental country than elsewhere. It is true that the District Boards are driven to this expedient in order to supply themselves with funds for current needs, but that means that more roads are imposed upon them than they can bear in addition to their many other obligations under the Act. All roads leading to and from the markets of a district, as distinct from the inter-village roads, should be maintained at the expense of Government. All should be free to commerce. This would leave

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the Board free to attend to the inter-village roads, which they might immensely improve at moderate cost if, instead of blindly spreading earth by the mile, they mended only the bad places. The cess would then be equally distributed, instead of concentrated on main roads which are to most villages in no obvious sense of local use.

A partial solution of this question of inland traffic which should have been heartily adopted long ago is the construction of narrow-gauge railways, especially in those parts of the country where the making of a metalled road, apart from embanking and bridging, costs Rs. 7000 per mile, or nearly half the cost of a narrow-guage railway. In a typical district, that of Broach, there is a main road to Jambusar thirty miles long, on which more than eight lakhs of rupees have been spent by the Local Board since 1863, and, after all, sections of it at the end of the cotton season are almost impassable. If the Board twenty or thirty years ago had borrowed the eight lakhs and made for itself a light railway, it would to-day be in possession of a valuable property instead of a white elephant, taking no account of possible profit and of the convenience and gain to all classes of carriage by rail instead of by cart. If, instead of borrowing, it had guaranteed a dividend to outside capitalists, it would have had the whole or nearly the whole of its eight lakhs to devote to other public works. In such a populous district it is moreover very probable there

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would have been an excess of profits over and above the guarantee. There certainly would be now, when the cost is much less. Nor is it a mere engineering and financial proposition. An object of Government has long been to evoke local patriotism by means of popular election to the Local Board. A potent auxiliary might be the local railway—paid for at least in part by local shareholders, guaranteed by the local cess, carrying daily backwards and forwards local passengers and local produce. It would be a common possession of which all would be proud. It may not even be too visionary to foresee its shares a favourite investment for the reserve of the village co-operative societies! Hitherto for many years a legal impediment in the wording of the Bombay Act has been allowed to stand in the way. I believe also some reluctance is felt by the Government of India to allow a Board to give a guarantee if it levies its existing cesses up to the full legal limit, on the ground that in such a case it possesses no margin to fall back on for payment of a call to make up a dividend. To this it may be said that in most districts there is an ample surplus in the shape of the difference between ordinary and extraordinary expenditure. If out of a gross income of one lakh only Rs. 75,000 is appropriated to establishments and maintenance of existing works, the balance of Rs. 25,000 is at once available for such purposes as a fulfilment of guarantee by the simple and usual process of suspending

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new works. The saving in road repairs already alluded to would swell the fund. Given a good prospect of paying traffic and a normal Local Board income distinctly above normal expenditure, many districts should be not only allowed but encouraged to provide themselves with light railways, without the very unpopular condition of a new cess.

Upon railways in general there is much to be said from the people's point of view, but I would gladly, if it were possible, avoid the meshwork of rules and figures which the various lines have spun for themselves. Their goods rates are contained in bulky volumes useless to the plain man, and, I may add, equally so to the ordinary stationmaster and his staff. However, I must brave the scorn of the expert railway official for the sake of bringing out a few facts * which cannot be generally known. The traffic manager wields an irresponsible power over the country commanded by his railway which should not be entrusted to any man, and least of all to one who, rightly from his own point of view, regards nothing but his masters' dividend and certain wide limits set down by Government. By a slight re-adjustment of rates he can, and sometimes does, break down a flourishing trade or transfer it to another part of the country ; he can, and sometimes does, crush a rising home manufacture in favour of a foreign customer. An amended Code of Civil Procedure occupies for days and months the wisest of the land, but is of less

* The facts here given were collated in 1903.

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practical consequence to the people of a district than a new edition of their Local Goods Traffic Book.

Let us take examples. The trade of Western India has been for unknown centuries mainly by sea, the cheapest mode of carriage in the world. It has been carried on by a sturdy population of Lascars, who would be an element of strength to any nation. The coast is studded with their emporiums such as, say, Broach, which was once a prosperous port since, at least, the days of Ptolemy—a centre of vitality to the surrounding district such as no wise government would willingly see extinguished or absorbed into the overgrown concretion of Bombay. In these latter days the B. B. and C. I. Railway appears on the scene to bid for the traffic, and no one in his senses would object to free and fair competition between land and sea. But is it free and fair? The boat has the great natural advantage of being cheap, but it is slow and subject to greater risk from weather and possibly from thieving. With fair play all round, much merchandise would take the rail, while other, such as coal, would prefer the water. Even in advanced England, sea-borne coal holds its own, and Germany has lately taught that canals have a part to play in the steady development of a country. This was, I believe, once recognised in Western India, but lately more trade has been diverted to the railway, and a glance at its rates will show the means employed. The rate by rail for coal from Bombay to Ankleshwar is Rs. 2.4

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per maund. The rate by rail from Bombay to the port of Broach, which is six miles farther and across the river Narbadda, is Rs. 1.10, that is ten annas less, per maund. In other words, in order to crush the sailor, to whom as a taxpayer it owes its very existence, the Company carries coal between Ankleshwar and Broach at a loss of more than ten annas per maund. On the other hand, from the ports its rates are specially high, not only for coal but for other goods, so as to choke off their impost by sea. Can this be for the good of the country?

The interests of Government are as little regarded. Years ago there is said to have been a steady traffic in timber from the forests of the Panch Mahals to the port of Broach, and thence to woodless Kathiawar. Instead of encouraging this current of trade, the railway rate from Godhra (Panch Mahals) to Broach, 111 miles, is Rs. 0.4.6 as against the rate from Godhra to Bombay, 318 miles, of only Rs. 0.3.1, that is roughly two-thirds of the charge for nearly treble the distance. The sea trade in timber of Broach has disappeared, and is said to have been transferred to Bulsar, which is supplied by road from the forests of a native state. Yet another instance to show how a railway will even run in opposition to the declared policy of the State. Broach and Surat cotton once had a name only second to that of American, but of recent years has lost it, the chief cause being that inferior cotton has been brought from Khandesh into

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those districts, then mixed with the superior variety, and passed into the market under its name. Some time ago the matter was taken up with great energy by Mr. (now Sir Evan) James, who pointed out that dealers were going so far as to send bales from inferior districts to Bombay through the superior districts simply to get upon them the railway marks of the latter. The evils were realised by such bodies as the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce as well as by Government, and the anxious consideration that ensued only came to nothing because of the dislike of the merchants for special legislation. Some time afterwards the Tapti Valley Railway was opened, connecting Khandesh with Surat and Broach, and the freights were so adjusted as to aid and encourage the fraudulent dealer whom Government and its officers had been taxing their wits to put down. There was, of course, no intention to do so, but the interests of the common carrier were regarded and no other. As a fact it costs less to bring cotton from Khandesh round by Broach (Rs. 0.5.1 for unginned plus Rs. 0.7.1 for half pressed), to gin and half press it there and to send it on to Bombay under a false description, than it does to send it directly and honestly from Khandesh to Bombay (Rs. 0.15.8), the distance of the former being 341 miles and the distance of the latter being only 267 miles.

Again, we should expect the railway manager, left to himself, to favour his best customers, the importers,

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at the expense of the indigenous manufacturer, and this is what happens. In the city of Ahmedabad my friend, Mr. F. F. Munshi, has carried on with great enterprise and resolution a factory of lucifer matches. I should like to tell his story, if this were the place for it. It proves that there are Indians of pluck and practical wits, who, in a different country, would win fortune and influence. In his own land the only help Mr. Munshi has got is from the "foreign" Government, who, at the request of its local officers, has given him wood and other concessions on the easiest terms. All that his own people will do to assist him is to lend him money at twenty per cent.! For years he has been competing with the Japanese. With infinite pains he has learned how to make in the Indian climate a match which will rival theirs, forcing down the wholesale price from 15 annas to 8 annas per gross. For years he has been fighting for an entrance on equal terms with his opponents into the markets of Upper India on which his ultimate success depends, for it is obvious that matches, at less than a pie per box, can only pay if sold in enormous quantities, and that slight favouritism in the cost of carriage may turn the scale. When my attention was first drawn to him the freight for imported matches from Bombay to Agra was precisely the same as for the native matches from Ahmedabad to Agra, although the distance in the former case was 847 miles, and in the latter case only 537 miles. In other words, the State

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guaranteed railway was giving a bounty to the foreign manufacturer equivalent to the whole cost of carriage between Bombay and Ahmedabad. It would strain the powers of a Viceroy to do as much for a home trade. It is impossible to imagine his doing it, as the railway does, for a foreigner. On remonstrance by the Commissioner, the Traffic Manager of the B. B. and C. I. assented to some little modification, but argued that "any reduction in favour of Ahmedabad "will kill our traffic in imported matches from "Bombay, much against our interests. Competition "with Karachi and Calcutta has forced us to quote "lower rates from Bombay." The Bombay Government would give no help beyond the cynical advice to Mr. Munshi to supply his neighbours and not to seek to extend his market. In other words, not one but every native industry that enters the field must be trampled down in a struggle for freight among the railways. Surely it is time that some strong power should intervene to make it understood that railways were made for the country, not the country for them. This undue favour to the importer is short-sighted policy even for railway interests, for hundreds of well-paid employees in the local factory would soon, as passengers and as consumers of imported goods, make up for the loss of the loads of Japanese matches, to say nothing of the import of raw materials. At this moment (1893) on a consignment from Bombay to Delhi, the bounty given by the B. B. and C. I.

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Railway to the foreigner amounts to Rs. 2.14.4 per case of fifty gross. As the wholesale price of a case is Rs. 22, this not only deprives the native maker of the advantage of being nearer to market, but sweeps away the whole of his profit. Some excuse for the Bombay line may be found in the action of the great lines running from Calcutta and Karachi, the latter of which belongs to Government, and both of which, so far as I can understand it, make the invidious distinction of charging the native product fifth-class and the imported article only second-class rates. The N. W. Railway charges for native matches on a minimum weight of 20 maunds, and the E. I. on a minimum weight of 100 maunds, while the minimum weight for the foreigner is 1 maund only, thus placing a veto on small trial parcels of the former sent into a new or closely contested market. The Traffic Manager of the N. W. Railway defends the preferential rates by saying that they are not fixed with the object of encouraging foreign goods but because of the longer lead. He omits to mention that this concession for longer lead is only given on consignments from the port. The Japanese match is carried from Karachi, to, say, Chaman, *i.e.* 622 miles, for two-thirds of a pie per maund per mile, but the native match, starting from the interior, say, *via* Bhatinda, to Hyderabad, that is a longer distance of 669 miles, is charged one pie, or fifty per cent. more. In working for commercial success it may be no part of the Manager's duty to

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study the requirements of the people except as conducing to increased traffic. He advances through the land with all the power of steam and capital, and reasonably conscious of beneficent intentions. Like Gulliver, he strides along the streets in the land of Lilliput, but is not always so thoughtful as Gulliver, who "walked with the utmost circumspection for fear "of damaging the roofs and eaves of the houses with "the skirts of his coat." I am aware of the enormous difficulty of the subject, but am bound to suggest that without some control by men of broader vision the railways will strangle as much as they develop.

VI.

It may be that Lord Curzon's Government has the defects of its merits. A Viceroy of phenomenal power has gathered around him the very ablest men in the country, who are together stronger than perhaps all the provincial governments combined. For the time all goes well. It would be easy to mention local problems in the solution of which the men at Calcutta or Simla have shown keener and truer insight than the men on the spot. A time comes, however, when there will be no Lord Curzon, and no one inspired by him, and there will be left to us the renewed impetus to centralised administration without the wisdom that justified it for the time.

This thought troubles some of us in viewing the

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great reconstruction of the police now going forward. The preserving of general good order as distinguished from "Criminal Investigation," which deals with special classes of professional crime and requires experts, is, of all work in the country, that which can least afford to bear the curse of departmentalism. It should be most ready of all not only to adapt itself to the local variations of custom and character, but to respond to recurring change which education and other forces bring about. It should above every other "go with the times." Now the fear is that the new system, now being hammered out at Simla in so much detail down to the constables' wages, and being fitted on to the country with imperial rules and orders and an Act of the imperial Legislature, may stunt future growth. Nothing is so perfect that we can afford to stereotype it. I do not suppose that even the Members of the Commission consider the scheme to be finally the best for Bombay, even if it is for Bengal. Some parts of it, as for instance that which would force the city of Bombay, Gujerat, Maharashtra, Canara, and Sind into one and the same mould, seem to some of us to be not the best but the worst possible. Some future member of the Government of Bombay may have very clear views of what the Presidency requires, but what chance will he have with an Act and detailed orders of the Government of India against him, to say nothing of a bureau at Simla that may have ceased to care much about police, and to whom its

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predecessors' orders have become a fetish. What they have said they have said.

My position is that the most congenial of all governments to the Oriental is the personal. As that is out of the question the best substitute we can get is solidarity. Especially it makes for weakness to split up the elemental administration, without which society could not exist, by which I mean Police and so-called "Land Revenue" work, including Forests, unless it is necessary for efficiency, and emphatically it is *not* necessary so to isolate the police. Their work is not a special pursuit marked off from others by boundaries of its own. If any expert knowledge is required in it for capable headship, it is in fact just that sort of general experience acquired by a Commissioner through a long career of district work who should be aided by a trained police officer for inspection and routine. The art of preventing and detecting ordinary crime is concerned with the rudimentary forces of native society. It penetrates at times into the nooks and corners of business, social and religious life. I take it, for instance, that the main reason of the dead set made against the police in the newspapers was and is their incivility to the respectable classes. Rude words to such men rankle longer than having to give a small bribe, and longer still than hearsay torture of a few "budmashes" or annoyance to villagers. As the good policeman is the man who picks up information of every kind wherever he goes, so the authority who is

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in the best position to control with insight and breadth is the man who is more or less in touch with every other interest. Such is the Collector, and over him the Commissioner of Division.

This was the scheme advocated for Bombay by one of the ablest men (Sir Barrow Ellis) who ever came to India, and who knew Bombay as few do. He thought the lines of ordinary administration should be co-ordinated by the Commissioner, who is in a sense above departmental feeling, and whose sphere is at the same time not so large as to preclude personal knowledge, without which no other tie between government and the people is worth considering. It is seldom that the Secretariate realises two under-currents—one is the constant bribe-mongering (I will not call it by so grave a name as corruption), the love of interfering, and the perfunctoriness of the average native subordinates, and the other is the jealousy among themselves, which stultifies public business and makes the people's convenience quite secondary. Nothing can repress this detestable spirit like a common superior. Nothing can aggravate it so much as the erection of the police into a separate self-sufficient department able to snap its fingers at the chief Administrator of the Division. Moreover, what the police want inwardly is a new spirit, and that can never be conveyed to them on paper. The Inspector-General will, wherever trained, presumably be selected with care, and therefore not be a man of "depart-

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mental" mind, but he must of necessity be almost as much aloof as Government itself. He will only come into personal contact with the district life by a hurried visit to one or two centres in each in a year. He must entrust his authority to his Deputy, a promoted police officer, who will often be drawing more pay than the District Magistrate. I cannot conceive any arrangement more calculated to produce friction, or worse still a "don't care" feeling among those on whose oversight Government will have to ultimately depend whatever schemes they may formulate. There are few among the European police officers who will be free from sectional feeling. It is not so much their fault as the result of training in the school of a department; but perhaps the worst result will be that their tone will be readily taken up by their native subordinates, to whom it will be only too congenial. At the same time their position will not be considerable enough to make them a personal link. The whole question of the police resolves itself into our getting the right sort of men in all ranks; and Superintendents at least will never come up to the mark unless they are recognised more fully by or on behalf of Government as individuals, not as numbers in a grade. The first and indispensable essential is that they should be able to talk easily with the people in their own language. Many cannot; but one may be excused for doubting if Government knows which they are, and anyhow, it seems to make no difference in their

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appointment and promotion. Men have even been known, after being fifteen months in charge of a district, to apply without shame for an extension of the time allowed for passing the trifling language examination, which means that for all the time they have been doing their work through the medium of a clerk, a possibility that should not be tolerated for six months, but it excites no remark. The question is not easy to deal with, but the police will not be satisfactory so long as men who cannot talk straight to the people or are notoriously unjust, or unfitted by temper to command, are promoted, or if a good worker's hopes are deferred by others being thrust in over his head who were not there when he started.

So much for the personal equation, and it cannot be asserted by the bird's-eye supervision of an Inspector-General. The only safe means is the authority of the Commissioner who knows his Division and has many avenues of information not open to anyone else. It is objected that his intervention has been tried, both in Bombay and in other provinces, and failed. In the first place, I say nothing about other provinces where, to begin with, the greater number of Commissioners' Divisions would alone make the matter more complicated. A perusal of Mr. Carstairs' thoughtful book on Local Government in Bengal reveals to a Bombay man how different are the problems of administration in that province. In the second place, both in Bombay and probably elsewhere

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also, the experiment has been to make the Commissioner an Inspector-General for his Division, which is expecting of him an impossible task. The immediate inspection, enquiries, and routine work of all sorts should be entrusted to a competent Deputy promoted from the Superintendents. The Commissioner would only stand behind him, tempering and strengthening his action by his judgment and influence, dealing himself with matters outside routine or likely to raise susceptibilities. Thus matured and broad experience, all-round local knowledge and mastery of technical police work would be united—an ideal combination. Another objection which seems scarcely worthy of notice is that the Commissioner of real life has no taste for police work, and would neglect it. That he should neglect the inspection of buttons and drill when it was imposed upon him is not wonderful, but that he would decline to study a vital interest of his people if his official repute depended on it, is not to be believed. As already said, the Commissioner standing next to Government is pretty much what Government makes him. The gravest reason for a centralised department is that some one is needed at head-quarters to consult, some one who can give advice and receive orders without delay. The paramount question is how to secure the best advice and right action, and if this be answered for the moment in favour of the Commissioners, the next step should be, not to exclude

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their help, but to consider how to make it available. The convenience of the Secretariate is not the main object of Government. Most matters that call for reference would concern one Commissioner only, and in that case the telegraph annihilates distance. So it would, in a lesser degree, in those few cases when reference to all was necessary. On the other hand, the Board of the three Commissioners, as suggested above, might at its meetings compare notes on police as well as on other subjects. Expert "criminal investigation" is a business of itself, and would, of course, be in special hands.

With the Government of India orders on the Commission Report the question has ceased to be one of present politics, but it seems to me a pity that one way should be laid down and every other for ever barred. Why should there be one sealed pattern for all India when the greatest advantage of provincial governments is lost if free growth is not to be allowed to a variety of types? The one thing that is certain to be wrong is absolute uniformity.

VII.

The governments justly plume themselves on the stress they lay upon touring by their district officers, and there can be no doubt that gathering them all into their headquarters during the Rains and sending

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them out with horses and tents to live in the fields and villages for the rest of the year promotes best of all a vigorous and healthy tone in every connection. It might, however, be better understood that every individual is bound in his movements to consult the public convenience before his own. It is a frequent and just complaint that, in the absence of a published programme, a party who has business at an official's camp does not know where to find it, and often enough, after arriving at one place, finds he has to tramp fifteen or twenty miles farther on. It is a hardship, too, on respectable people if a number of them are summoned to a remote camp where there is no lodging within easy reach, or if a case is neglected, hurried, or adjourned for insufficient cause. These are details which cannot always be observed, but much irritation would be avoided if they were impressed especially on the minds of young officers, and if every one understood that Government had strong views on the subject. Another small want of the times springs from the paucity of European officers and the increased cost and difficulty in Bombay of carrying kit about. It is not realised in high places how much harder life is becoming for Europeans on small pay—on anything below Rs. 7 or 800 per month for the gazetted ranks, and Rs. 3 or 400 for the lower —if there is a family, owing to the greater cost of necessaries, the inferiority and greater cost of servants, and the less obliging attitude of the natives in many

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places. It is not to be wondered at that a man to whom every rupee is an object often omits to make a journey in a direction where he would be useful, because it will involve an expensive caravan of carts. The large increase in the number of departmental officers who have to travel through every district is a real grievance to the cultivators, who have to supply them with carriage. For both these reasons it is greatly to the interest of Government to make it easy for its officers to visit outlying parts without encumbrances. Every line of country outside headquarters should be provided at every stage not only with plain houses, but houses supplied with simple, every-day furniture, down to knives and forks. This would not only relieve poorly-paid men of expense, but the villagers of what is virtually impressment of carts, and it would render easier that contact with the people which is in these days of supreme importance.

Whatever may be said of their pleasures, the English do their governing sadly. It is scarcely to be expected that in the centres of social delight, such as Poona and Mahableshwar, the growing dulness of the Mofussil station should be realised, or that anyone should trouble much about it if it were. On the European the withdrawal of the smaller garrisons, the increased cost of living, which leaves less money for recreation, the diminution from various causes of sport, and other changes operate. On the native official the higher and therefore costlier, standard of living, the

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increased expense of educating his sons and marrying his daughters, have the same effect. To the masses the human interest of the old Durbars—their processions and other displays, their elephants, nautches, illuminations, even their caprices—gave a silver lining to the worst misgovernment, and education had not yet raised popular aspirations to anything higher. We may now look in vain for any sign that the rulers of the land care for its Music, or its Poetry, or its lesser pleasures, except those of Grog-shops at one end and Academic Convocations at the other. A few years ago a movement began among the Bombay police themselves for the installation of bands at headquarters. To many it would have seemed worthy of strong encouragement, a pleasure to the people, tending to make the police popular, and in the men themselves evoking *esprit de corps*. Not so, however, did it seem to the departmental authorities, who frowned upon it, and though I believe many districts now have bands, they owe their existence to private liberality and the enthusiasm of the men themselves.

The people delight in Melas (fairs), the ostensible but not the only object of which is bathing in some sacred water, or doing homage to some popular local deity. It is a Methodist camp meeting, with the joys of Hampstead Heath on Bank Holiday thrown in. The Congress have shrewdly played on this chord for all it is worth. Their annual gathering is to the English-speaking class what the Mela at such a

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place as Hardwar is to the Hindus in general, the *motif* being political instead of religious or commercial. I have as little desire to impugn the one as the other, but both assemblies owe much of their attractiveness to the national love of an "outing." I am far from suggesting that Government should play the *rôle* of Barnum and make plans for the entertainment of the people. If they could revive the Dassera procession of olden time in any unobjectionable form, it would be too late to do so without loss of dignity. But I do plead for more human sympathy, more recognition of what pleases these millions of sensitive people under us, as well as what grieves them. No tax collector, however forbearing, no legislator however wise, no judge however just, is so fitted to rule a people as he who knows why they rejoice and why they weep, and acts accordingly. It is touching to see how an Indian warms to an Englishman who can speak to him on equal terms in his own tongue, and who knows enough of his ways to avoid being ridiculous; for your simple home-liver everywhere regards with some contempt, as an ignoramus, him who is not familiar with the every-day facts of his little world. The highest compliment to a district officer, which lies in the mouth of the common folk, is "The Sahib understands everything." It is also the highest they can offer to their Government.

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VIII.

I deliberately think that sentences of death are too lightly passed in India. The general quality of evidence in that country is too distinctly inferior to justify, except in rare cases, an irrevocable decision. The mere assertion of a witness is of little value as such, and a judge, "after hearing an identical story "over and over again, is glad to meet with some circum-"stance, however slight, which supports it, and which "is not on the face of it likely to have been devised "for the purpose." Advantage is taken of this fact by the shrewder of those who set out to fabricate a false charge. Once, long ago, I was called to the Civil Hospital at Ahmedabad to take the dying declaration of a man who had been found seriously wounded, with a slit bag lying near him. With laboured breath he told the story of how he had met two men, whose names and description he gave, who after a long conversation which he detailed, had attacked him and run away with his money, leaving him for dead. There was collateral evidence to show that the two men implicated were away from their homes at the time. Many a man has been hanged on no stronger a case. Yet, by an accident, it came to light that the wounded man was the agent of a gang who prepared false charges as a fine art, for payment received, and the discovery led to the revision of at least one case in

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another district which they had brought off successfully. There is a class of cultivators notorious for its vindictiveness, of whom the story is well known in Gujerat, that one of them murdered his own mother, and charged an enemy, whom he wished to ruin, with the crime. Evidence in a country where such things are scarcely exceptional should be judged by tests of its own, and, in my opinion, the entire abolition of capital punishment would be safer than the present practice. Better still it would be to reserve it for very special cases, when there is absolutely no alternative to the guilt of the accused. As head of the Central Provinces Administration, I more than once had cases before me, in which the evidence consisted of the prisoner's confession, and the ostensibly proved statement that the murdered person's ornaments had been found in his possession. As no defence was put in, except a plea of Not Guilty, it was necessary to convict, if the administration of justice was not to be broken up. The certainty would have been good enough for an ordinary affair of life. Yet every one of any experience would well know that the case was not conclusive, and might easily have been a fiction from beginning to end. Confession in the mouth of an Indian establishes no such strong presumption as it does in that of an Englishman; and if the conviction of an innocent man is desired, no device is commoner or easier than to allege that incriminating property was found in his possession or on his showing.

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In short, a verdict of Guilty was justified, nay demanded, for the safety of society, but not an irretrievable sentence.

It is very unfortunate that a punishment which once existed of even more efficacy, as a deterrent, than death, should have been deprived of its special force by the action of the Government of India. Transportation for life no longer means for life. In the words of the Law Commission, "Prolonged "imprisonment may be more painful, but it is not so "much dreaded beforehand; nor does a sentence of "imprisonment strike either the offender or the by-"standers with so much horror as a sentence of exile "beyond the Black Water. This feeling, we believe, "arises chiefly from the mystery which overhangs the "fate of the convict. . . . He is taken for ever from "the society of all who are acquainted with him, and "conveyed by means of which the natives have but an "indistinct notion over an element which they regard "with extreme awe, to a distant country of which they "know nothing, and from which he is never to return. ". . . . It is on this feeling of terror that the efficacy "of the punishment depends, and this feeling would "be greatly weakened if transported convicts should "frequently return." This view has not been taken by final authority, and every town now contains men who have returned to disperse the mystery and take all the terror out of the punishment. For prevention of crime they might just as well have been sent to the

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district jail, thus saving the expense of carriage to the Andamans. I do not ignore the motives which induced Government not to deprive even the life-convict of hope, but at the same time regret that the terror of literal transportation for life was not retained as a punishment for all murder cases which are fairly proved, but in which absolute certainty is not attained.

The misplaced value we attach to confessions perhaps not rarely brings about a miscarriage of justice. It is so hard for the sane Englishman, healthy and vigorous in mind and body, to believe that a man will make statements against himself unless they are true. Yet I believe it is not uncommon in India. The average Indian will say almost anything if he is skilfully bullied. Even in England it has sometimes happened that a prisoner has wrongly pleaded guilty, in despair at finding himself far from home and friends and surrounded by unsympathetic strangers. In India two more powerful motives often operate, (1) a belief often fostered by the police, that a confession will lead to more lenient treatment, and (2) in the case of crimes that have attracted public attention, a desire for notoriety which, in many natives of the country, amounts to a disease.

In connection with the low value of verbal evidence, it may be noted that there is no binding form of oath that can be ordinarily administered in the Courts.

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This is important when it is remembered that even in England many men will tell a lie in conversation who will hesitate to repeat it on judicial oath. Religious forms such as holding the cow's tail, for Hindus, or on the Koran for Mahomedans may by law be tendered in some cases, but the permission to use them is of little practical advantage, as they are considered degrading to a respectable man. Consequently a judicial officer is limited to taking depositions on solemn affirmation, with no terror before the eyes of the witness but the very shadowy one of a conviction for perjury under the Penal Code.

It is perhaps too late now even to discuss any alteration in the substantive criminal law, but I have always regretted the foreign tone given to it by the entire exemption of the woman from punishment for adultery. The unanimous disapproval of this, and the universally opposite practice of native governments, are in themselves a fair reason against it, there being no high moral principle involved. The higher classes would never invoke a court of law under the section under any circumstances. It is exclusively a law for the lower classes, and among such the considerations which made the Law Commissioners so tender to women do not apply. It cannot be said that they "share (except in rare cases) the attentions of a husband with several other wives," that they are "left in seclusion," are "deprived of liberty and rights," or are "unable to defend themselves."

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They are probably as often guilty as their paramours, and their absolute immunity under the law is not in accord with the popular sense, or with facts.

And so this selection from my note-book comes to an end. It does not profess to sweep the whole horizon. Even within its limits it is impossible that a wiser man than I am should be right in everything, but if my main contention be listened to, nothing else matters very much. That contention is that the broad lines of government as lately extended and deepened by Lord Curzon are true, but the administrative filling-in is often at fault. Doubtless much that has been written above could be pulverised by a clever Under-Secretary, to his own complete satisfaction; which may merely mean that insight does not depend on logic, but on intuition, and that again comes only of human contact. If to the firmness, rectitude, technical efficiency, and organizing power of the able men who have of late years exercised provincial authority, were added more personal knowledge and sympathy, the British Empire in India would be quite the grandest thing that ever existed.

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